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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JOHN MAHON

THE RECORD OF THE LABOUR
GOVERNMENT

WILLIE THOMPSON

FRANTZ FANON

DISCUSSION:

B. RUHEMANN }
BERT WARD }
HONOR ARUNDEL }

THE NATIONAL PROBLEM IN BRITAIN

OLIVE ARNOT

FREE SPEECH

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Editorial Comments

THE Brookings Institute Report on *Britain's Economic Prospects* has had a remarkable press boost and all schools of thought can find something in it which meets with their approval.

Labour's right wing seems to find comfort in the Brookings conclusion that Britain's doleful economic situation is due to the policies pursued by *all* governments since the war and that at long last it appears to be conducting policies on the correct capitalist lines. Labour militants surveying the by-election figures will find it difficult to extract much comfort from this fact.

Nevertheless, it is quite extraordinary that in view of what has actually happened, anything resembling progress (in the narrow capitalist sense of the word) has taken place in the British capitalist economy at all.

Here are some of the remarks of Robin Marris in a review of the book:

"The story of the British economy in the past ten years has its base in the fact that in this country we get less output for all kinds of input, including capital, labour (measured man hours), and 'skilled' labour, measured in years of education, than almost any other Western industrial country. *Consequently, although we are growing faster than ever before in our history, every other comparable country is doing better.*

"On top of this we piled rapidly rising overseas military expenditure and large capital exports. Yet all the time we were committed to maintaining London as an international financial centre, to a fixed exchange rate, full employment and to faster economic growth.

"Since these objectives were inconsistent the stop-go process was almost inevitable, and it in turn dislocated growth.

"By refusing to face reality (in my view a national failing, or shall we say an Establishment posture) we adopted the most costly type of non-solution and compounded our troubles."

But precisely all these facts were pointed out by British Marxists like R. Palme Dutt in the entire post-war period and repeated in innumerable other books, pamphlets and economic statements. It was one of the most frequently argued theses in the working-class movement. Even Wilson at times flirted with it.

If there was any "Establishment posture" which chose to ignore these growing crises, it was due to the imperialist structure, the still powerful imperialist bias of the British economy, which both political

parties served, and, indeed, still serve with equal subservience. This is what the Brookings Institute carefully overlooks.

The message of the Institute to capitalists and workers in Britain alike is to become as efficient as the Americans and many of their problems will be solved.

Unfortunately for this thesis the Brookings Institute has published quite a number of studies of developments which highlight aspects of the American crisis—the chronic balance of payment deficit, the persistent million-fold unemployment, the terrifying poverty, the ever-increasing reduction of job opportunities for the youth—all this in the midst of the growing efficiency and technological mastery in production which is actually exacerbating all American problems.

There is therefore no reason to assume that the application of the policies issued by Brookings will provide a way out of Britain's difficulties.

Tory Alternative

The Tories are capturing some votes in by-elections but what for? What can the people who are voting for them expect if they ever got returned to Parliament?

Two *Sunday Times* journalists interviewed Mr. Heath as to what he would do if the Tories were returned. Mr. Heath's first point was delightfully simple. The Labour Government was doing badly because it had lost the confidence of the business community. Perhaps! But from 1955 onwards the whole British economy has been growing much more slowly than other capitalist countries. Was the confidence of the business community in these years being withheld from the Tory Government? Or was the business community—for specific reasons connected with its imperialist heritage—much more incompetent than similar groups in other capitalist countries?

Further, if it is now sabotaging the Labour Government, doing some damage to the economy, and therefore hurting sections of the British people, why should the British electorate support it as an alternative to Labour? At any rate Heath will get little credence after Brookings, in trying to convince people that the British business community is on its toes and is only being held back by the incompetent Labour Government.

What, however, are the people who are turning

to the Tories voting for? Mr. Heath puts forward the following programme to rescue the British economy from its difficulties:

"I want to see a fresh start. This means a firm control over Government expenditure."

Yet the Tories are making it clear that they will increase Government expenditure on troops and bases East of Suez.

"Changes in the tax structure, so as to provide encouragement and incentives."

In other words, cutting income and super tax, while increasing prices all round by taxes on all kinds of consumer goods. A few coppers income-tax relief for the average taxpayer perhaps in the Budget. Higher prices on every item of household expenditure for the housewife.

"Changing the agricultural system to enable the British farmer to expand and cut down imports."

What changes? Giving farmers freedom to raise their prices? This on top of all the other price increases that are on their way?

Why should any intelligent voter support this? The answer is that few electors notice the Tory Programme. What they are noticing is the general malaise of the British capitalist economy, and the attacks which the Labour Government are waging on the trade unions. Above all they are noticing its calm indifference to the growth of unemployment. Unless there is a radically different policy on the part of the government, the Labour militants will battle in vain.

The Business Community

Heath's allegation that the Labour Government, despite the capitalist policies it has been pursuing, has lost the confidence of the business community, appears to be true enough but who has confidence in the business community?

A fierce controversy is opening out between sections of the business community as to how the financial houses in the City are behaving in the take-over Donnybrook that is now raging. According to *The Observer* Mr. Frank Kearton of Courtaulds has been blasting the City "as a thoroughly unprincipled place—a place where lies are two a penny, avarice is God and the weak get trampled in the rush for the fast buck."

The Observer City Editor appears to think that there may be something in these observations:

"In the past the City was largely honest because half its members had not the brains to be anything else, and the other half saw little point in dishonesty since the living was fat enough anyhow. But since the war a whole new race has popped up within the Square Mile. Men smart enough to see the opportunities for rapid wealth that exist in the City and with the education to make the most of the oppor-

tunities. A few have been rogues, many have lined their pockets at the expense of the unsuspecting public.

"Standards of conduct in the City have fallen lamentably low. Why else should it need a take-over panel? Most institutions, it is true, conduct their affairs in an upright fashion until there is, say £250,000 at stake. But reward and risk are high in the City. The temptation to cut a corner that could change a potential loss into a fat profit is great." (*The Observer*, June 30th, 1968.)

It is entirely credible that such a mob may have lost confidence, (When did it really have it?) in the Labour Government. Unfortunately, there are no signs that the Labour Government right-wing leadership has lost confidence in them.

War and Profit in USA

The degree to which the American economy is based on war emerges with unpleasant clarity from the study of various articles in the June *Economic Notes* of the American Labor Research Association.

Military expenditure, first, has climbed from \$50,000 million in 1965 to \$60,500 million in 1966 to \$72,500 million in 1967, and now to a rate of \$76,500 million in the first quarter of 1968.

With regard to war employment, the number in military service rose by 61,000 from the first quarter of 1967 to the first quarter in 1968, and the number of workers engaged in war production rose by 181,000 in the same period, making a total of 8,985,000 (of whom 3,474,000 are in military service and 5,511,000 in war production) or 11 per cent of the labour force.

In *Disarmament and the Economy*, edited by Benoit and Boulding, Professor Daniel B. Suits of the University of Michigan has an interesting chapter on the "Econometric Analysis of Disarmament Impacts," which throws light on the scale of war profits in the United States. He estimates that each "additional \$1,000 million of sales to government raises corporate profits at the margin by about \$600 million . . .", i.e. that whereas the military budget is increased, the great American corporation ultimately realise about 60 per cent of the increase as gross profit. Thus the increase of military spending from \$50,000 million in 1965 to a current rate of \$76,500 million, will have increased corporation profits by about \$15,900 million, a tidy sum.

War, said Lenin, "is very terrible, but it is terribly profitable."

Perhaps it is appropriate here to quote some figures of the other side of the American medal. *The Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty* (with its centre in Washington) set up a "Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United

States," which recently published its Report entitled *Hunger USA*.

The Board Report, estimating that 10 million people in the USA were hungry. "found concrete evidence of chronic hunger and malnutrition in every part of the United States." It found 256 counties in twenty states with conditions of "emergency hunger."

Emergency Decrees in West Germany

The campaign for the legislation of the German Communist Party is led by a very broad committee representing wide sections of working-class and progressive opinions.

This body has received nearly 4,000 requests for copies of the Draft Programme of the German Communist Party recently issued and along with them many more requests for information about the Party's policies on current political problems in Western Germany.

In response to these requests, the Initiative Committee has issued the latest statement of the Central Committee of the CPG entitled: "For the Democratic Renovation of the German Federal Republic" which outlines the Party's policy following the passing of the Emergency legislation by the Bundestag in June.

"The Federal Government has passed the Emergency legislation against the will of the majority of the people. This marks a new, dangerous stage in the evolution of Western Germany. The big business bosses, the military leaders and the Ministers who represent them, have given themselves power to set up an emergency dictatorship on the Greek model, to use troops against strikers and demonstrators, to call up factory and white-collar workers under martial law, to exile trade unionists and 'inconvenient' citizens from the places they live in, to confiscate the property of peasants and other working people."

"In open violation of the constitution they have introduced military law in peace time. . . ."

"The Emergency decrees have not only increased the danger of militarism and neo-Nazism in Western Germany itself—but have also exacerbated the relations between the two German states enormously. . . ."

"A democratic movement of resistance to these laws . . . has arisen of a scope not yet seen in Western Germany. Factories and trade unions, students and professors, communists, branches and organisations of the SPD, youth leagues, democratic citizens, representatives of the churches, have all joined forces in a common front in the factories, high schools and in the streets for the defence of the constitution. . . ."

Declaring that the ruling circles were able to get away with this reactionary legislation because, in addition to the support given them by the leaders

of the SPD, the resistance was still too small and the dangers underestimated, the statement declares:

"But this situation can and will be changed. . . . What is now necessary is the working out of a common platform for all those who oppose the application of the Emergency decrees . . . for those who wish to re-establish the Basic Law of the Constitution. . . ."

Foundation of the Communist Party

The first of a series of facsimile reproductions published by the Communist Party is the official report of the Communist Unity Convention, held in London on July 31st-August 1st, 1920, the Congress at which the Communist Party of Great Britain was founded.¹

Hard struggle and experience brought British Marxists face to face with the need for a united revolutionary party. The First World War found them disunited and, therefore, weakened in their resistance. The October 1917 Revolution brought home to many British Marxists the role that the revolutionary party (RSDLP) had played in Russia. The stormy post-war years in Britain carried the lesson further. So, from the different Marxist groups, like the British Socialist Party, Socialist Labour Party, Workers' Socialist Federation, South Wales Socialist Society and from the various organisations of shop stewards and the left wing of the Independent Labour Party, the demand began to be raised for the formation of a single, united Communist Party.

Negotiations began in 1919. They were long, involved, and complex. They ran into two main tactical problems—what should be the attitude of the future Party to parliamentary action, and should it or not apply for affiliation to the Labour Party.

On these points no agreement could be reached, and finally, the delegates of the British Socialist Party and of the Communist Unity Groups (which represented the SLP majority desirous of unity) agreed to call a Unity Convention and let the Convention itself decide on the various tactical issues. By this time the Workers' Socialist Federation had dropped out of the negotiations.

The Convention met on July 31st, 1920. And in this Report we can follow in detail the great debate on revolutionary tactics, along with the first discussions on Party organisation, the fraternal messages from Lenin, Clara Zetkin and others, the list of the delegates who attended.

This is a key document of the history of the Communist Party and essential for the understanding of the spread of Marxism in Britain. For

¹ *Communist Unity Convention: Official Report*, CPGB. Facsimile Reprint, 15s.

very many years it has been amongst the "rare documents" sold at vast prices by antiquarian book-sellers. It is very good indeed to have it again available.

It is much to be hoped that the series of Facsimile Reprints be continued. We should be very glad to hear from our readers what they think of the intended series and any proposals they have for documents that should be included, not just from the history of the Communist Party, but from the whole history of the radical and labour movement.

Bertrand Russell, Philosopher and Humanist

A new book by Dr. John Lewis,² published this month, is devoted to an examination of the theory and practice of Lord Russell. It deals perceptively with the contradiction which exists between Russell the philosopher and Russell the humanist.

As a philosopher, Russell is coldly intellectual and analytic, sceptical, pessimistic, and a protagonist of the "hard facts" school. As a humanist he is completely different—a man of passionate convictions and deep human sympathies. It was the humanist who went to prison in the First World War for protesting against the slaughter, and who went to prison again in 1961 for sitting down in Trafalgar Square in protest against nuclear armaments. And it is the humanist who is today so much revered. As for the philosopher, his *Principia Mathematica* remains one of the great works of the century—but most of those who have been inspired by Russell's militant example in the cause of social protests know little of the philosopher and care less.

John Lewis believes that such a philosophy as Russell's, which leaves so unbridgable a gap between theory and practice, is defective. And in his new book he both examines Russell's philosophy, showing very clearly what is wrong with it from an intellectual point of view, and examines how this limited, purely academic and analytic, up-in-the-air philosophy has left Russell in his practical outlook without guiding lines, convinced of what is right but unable to justify and guide his convictions by his reason.

John Lewis's book is Marxism of a high quality—without jargon, without dogmatism, convincing by its good sense and clarity rather than by appealing to formulas and quotations. It shows exactly what is wrong with the "bourgeois philosophy" of which Russell is today's most eminent representative; and does so trenchantly and uncompromisingly while

at the same time possessing insight into the appeal of such a philosophy and sympathising with the dilemma of a humanist like Russell, who hates the established order but is still unable to see how it can be overcome.

Everyday Life in England

It was a happy initiative of the Institute for Marxism-Leninism of the German Democratic Republic to sponsor the publication of a book of extracts from Marx's writings dealing with everyday life in England in the 1850s and early 1860s. Edited by Richard Sperl, illustrated by Elizabeth Shaw, it reveals a side of Marx that many will not know and aspects of English life that the official press often conveniently forgot.³

This is Marx the social observer, Marx the correspondent, Marx the humourist, Marx the journalist writing his *reportages* of daily events for the *New York Daily Tribune*, the *Neue Oder-Zeitung* (Germany) or *Die Presse* (Austria), Marx the friend of the contemporary working-class leaders, or subtle critic of people in high places, or moving unassuming but with eyes open amongst the ordinary people at meeting or tavern or park.

So we catch a glimpse of English politics now in the internal wrangles of Tories and Whigs, or at exciting electoral battles or rallies of the Chartists. We go with him on Church demonstrations.

We read of the corruption in the army and the brutal system of flogging still in use. Perhaps to our astonishment we find ourselves for a moment in the world of fashion, discussing *chronique scandaleuses* or financial frauds. Now we are with the world of the powerful—Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell or the Prince Consort or at Printing House Square with *The Times*. Then we go back to the world of the working class at the centre of Britain—the "workshop of the world," to the condition of the factory workers, "How much does a worker cost?", the cabbies' strike of 1853, the funeral of Feargus O'Connor.

Or we go to the militant meetings of Chartists and Trade Unionists or read Marx's contributions to the *People's Paper* founded by Ernest Jones in 1852.

This was a happy initiative. It is only a pity that we in Britain who most would enjoy it have only part of it scattered here and there in various translations.

Could it not be published in England, which in any case was the language in which many of the items here brought together were first written?

² *Bertrand Russell, Philosopher and Humanist*, by John Lewis. Lawrence & Wishart, paperback, 96 pp., 7s. 6d.

³ Karl Marx—*Englischer Alltag* (*Everyday Life in England*), Dietz Verlag, 1968.

Research on the General Strike

Probably more words have been written about the 1926 General Strike than any other event in British labour history. But really we know much too little about the people who actually did the work in the localities—who organised, picketed and lost their jobs. Did the majority see the strike as “political?” Was there a swing to the Left? Did betrayal spark off a mass revulsion from politics? As soon as we get to these questions—and these are the important ones—historians often start to shuffle their feet and use phrases like “can never be sure” and “as far as the evidence goes.” And, as anyone knows who has tried to piece things together locally, the evidence that we have does not go very far.

This makes the Party History Group’s current project all the more timely. The group plans to make a major, if last minute, effort to tape-record statements from strike veterans. By concentrating on particular areas and matching interviews with a search for new documentary material, the group hopes to build up a fairly solid picture of what went on locally in the various regions. The work is exciting but difficult. Technically, the study of “history from memory” is still in its infancy, and anyone who has attempted it knows the feeling of ham-fisted inability to tap more than a fraction of an incredibly rich source. The surest method remains the old one: patience, long experience and a good deal of hard preparatory work. But the results make it easily worth while, and doubly so for an event like the General Strike.

In *human* terms, in the labour movement at the local level, its importance can hardly be exaggerated. Though the strike lasted only ten days, its spirit has lasted most people a lifetime. A class moved together. The local councils of action and defence corps really seemed to some like the foundations of a new socialist republic springing up then and there. And there was no longer any doubt about the enemy. For the labour movement, the strike was a class education on a scale never seen before or since, and represented the starting point for a whole generation of militants. That is why every bit of recording that has been done or can still be done is so important. It means more than just a richness of fact and language because the strike was more than this. It offers some opportunity at least of preserving the way of thought of a pioneer generation. A great deal remains to be done. The Secretary of the History Group (16 King Street, London, W.C.2) would be very pleased to hear from people willing to help or who would like details of a meeting on the project to be held in Manchester at the beginning of October.

Socialist Scholars’ Conference

Following the example set in recent years by the Socialist Scholars’ Conferences in the United States of America, a meeting of Socialist teachers in institutions of higher education was held at the University of Hull over the weekend of April 20th-21st. Called on the initiative of the very active Socialist staff group at Hull, who provided the hospitality, it brought together fifty Socialist intellectuals, including about half a dozen members of the Communist Party.

The conference was opened by John Saville, of Hull University, who chaired the first session at which Monty Johnstone, of Woolwich College for Further Education, whom he introduced as a member of the Communist Party, read a paper on Socialist intellectuals and the labour movement. Whilst welcoming the growth of student and intellectual protest and revolt as one of the most positive developments of recent years, Monty Johnstone nonetheless disputed the arguments of Marcuse and Wright Mills that the leading role in social change had passed from the working class to the radical intelligentsia and student youth. Intellectual revolt could only lead the way to Socialist revolution if it based itself on and helped to move forward the working class which, because of its objective social position (as well as, in Britain, its size) must be the main force bringing about the transformation of society. The strength of the British labour movement lay in its firmly based organisation and its industrial militancy. Its weakness lay in its traditional indifference towards theory and its present lack of Socialist consciousness.

Here Socialist intellectuals could help if they had an understanding of Marxism and avoided any trace of paternalism in approaching the workers from whom they had much to learn. In the battle against capitalist and Social Democratic ideas on the state, classes, imperialism and socialism, as well as in combating racialism, Socialist intellectuals could make an important contribution in co-operation with the most advanced sections of the working class. They should avoid by-passing the traditional organisations built up by the workers. Those who were in the Labour Party, he recommended, should stay there and work to defeat the right wing within it, unless they are ready to join the Communist Party which for nearly fifty years had been the major Marxist organisation in the country and had an important contribution to make to the necessary process of ideological clarification and to a united struggle for socialism.

Sixteen people spoke in the discussion on this theme, taking up and developing most of these points and stressing above all the role of intellectuals within the labour movement in making a

fundamental ideological and cultural critique of capitalist society in all its aspects.

Democracy and Higher Education

In the second session, chaired by Ron Bellamy, of Leeds University, John Saville opened a discussion on the structure of higher education and the work of the Socialist left. The class structure of society was very clearly reflected in the institutions of higher education, he argued. Socialists should work to end the divisions between universities and other colleges. They should also endeavour to increase the discussion of new currents of Socialist thought, counteracting the prevalent soggy liberalism. There was no other basis for Socialist scholars but a Marxist understanding of their own subject and those working in the same field should get together to work towards this. (His experience in the Communist Party's Historians' Group, in which he had participated for ten years after the war, had shown him how valuable this could be, he said.) At the same time Socialist intellectuals should develop relations with the community at large, as they did at Hull where they took part in all kinds of local labour and peace movement activities and helped editorially and financially to produce the "Humberside Voice."

An important part of John Saville's paper dealt with democracy in higher education. It was necessary, he urged, to establish the equivalent of workers' control in universities with everyone involved in decision-making, to involve students in working our syllabuses and in the administration of their colleges, and to eliminate the hierarchical professional system and the especially undemocratic structure prevailing in colleges of further education. A number of participants in the subsequent discussion took up these questions either to amplify them with their own experiences (which, particularly in the case of Hull, have been considerably enriched since the conference) and proposals (e.g. the inclusion of administrative and clerical staff, porters, etc. in the proposed democratic structures) or to query how far "student power" could go (e.g. could an analogy really be drawn with industry? were students competent to sit on examining bodies and take part in awarding degrees?)

The role of the Socialist intellectual within his own sphere of work was the subject of the third session, chaired by Alan Hall of Keele University, at which Vic Allan, of Leeds University, opened the discussion. Education was neither neutral nor disinterested, he argued. To teach the conventional theories was almost always to adopt bourgeois assumptions and thereby support the *status quo*. If

one was interested in changing society one should deal with one's own subject not statistically but as a process of change. Marx provided the conceptual basis for this approach, but Marxists needed to do much hard work to develop Marxism in relation to their subjects and overcome the danger of backsliding into conventional frameworks. He found he had freedom in his department to teach Marxist economics, but universities imposed restraints through syllabuses and examinations. There was no scope for nonconformity, let alone Marxism, in the normal scholarly journals, and Marxists should, where possible, seek to develop their own, as well as organising seminars on their own subject with Marxists from other countries. (In Leeds they had made contacts with Marxists sociologists in Yugoslavia, the German Democratic Republic and France to this end.)

Further Conference

In the discussion it was emphasised that Marxism was not an end in itself but a means of attaining the truth. The value of team research to avoid fragmentation of subjects was argued. The need for staff to help students was stressed and the example cited of Lancaster University where sixty people belonged to an extra-curricular staff-student Socialist theory group. Some of the questions involved in developing a Socialist approach in the sphere of arts subjects, on the one hand, and the natural sciences, on the other, were also considered and emphasis placed on the consideration of social influences on both literature and science.

The final session concluded that the weekend had been well worth while and decided that a second conference, to which it was hoped that many other Socialist teachers in higher education would come, should be held at Hull on September 28th-29th to discuss: (1) Socialist foundations within the various disciplines (meeting principally in seminar groups each concerning itself with a particular discipline or branch of study); (2) the democratisation of higher education. Papers on these topics would be circulated in advance. The long-term project of a book on "Socialism and the Universities" was envisaged. The conference participants agreed to work for the formation and extension of active Socialist groups within each university with their activities co-ordinated nationally. The success of this first conference, characterised throughout by an extremely friendly atmosphere without a trace of sectarian rancour and revealing a considerable measure of broad agreement on the approach to many fundamental problems, shows the very good prospects for left-wing unity that exist in this sphere.

The Record of the Labour Government

October 1964 to March 1968

John Mahon

IN October 1964 the people ended thirteen years of Tory rule by returning Labour with a slender majority of five.¹ Mr. Harold Wilson at once announced his intention to govern, and put men of pronounced right-wing views in the key positions of his Ministry.

In March 1966, taking advantage of the good impression made by his social legislation, and by what he presented as a substantial improvement in the balance of payments, Mr. Wilson asked the country for a decisive majority to carry through Labour's programme for a New Britain. He got a majority of 97, a Gallup poll popularity rating of 70 per cent and a great fund of labour loyalty and public goodwill.

In a few months the government's policy of freezing earnings, increasing unemployment and raising the cost of living brought it into steadily widening conflict with the labour movement. In 1967 for the first time in history labour voters abstained in thousands and traditionally safe seats were lost. In the county elections labour losses included London, for thirty years its stronghold. Government policies met with all-round defeat at the 1967 Trades Union Congress and only scraped through at the Labour Party Conference.

The sterling crisis returned with such force that in November 1967 the government had to devalue the pound. Draconic tax and price increases were imposed, restraint on earnings was made compulsory. Mr. Wilson's popularity rating fell to 38 per cent and in the parliamentary by-elections of March 1968 Labour polled less than half its previous General Election vote.

Never in so short a time had a government done so much to antagonise so many.

The great positive factor in the situation is the uninterrupted movement of opposition to the government's right-wing policy, rising in volume and in clarity of its demand for a change in policy.

This article summarises the performance of the Labour government, discusses why it acts as it does, and looks at the rising left movement and its prospects.

¹ See Table A on p. 243.

I. THE FACTS: PROMISE AND PERFORMANCE

The main actions of the Labour Government are, for the purpose of this summary, noted under the heads of—home affairs; world affairs; the sterling and balance of payments crises.

Home Affairs

The period of the mini-majority saw a number of reforms, not far reaching but a welcome change from Tory indifference to hardship among the people.

Old-age pensions, sickness and unemployment benefits were raised; the earnings rule for widows and the health prescription charge were abolished. Some relief was given to low incomes ratepayers. The landlord's power to evict was curbed, security of tenure for tenants was extended by ending creeping decontrol, tribunals were set up to decide "fair" rents. Local authorities were instructed to plan the reorganisation of secondary education on comprehensive lines. Employers were obliged to make payments to redundant employees. The trade union right to strike was relieved of the tort of intimidation applied to it by the Rookes-Barnard judgment. Office building was controlled. A subsidy to London Transport prevented for some months a further increase in fares.

The impact of these reforms on the lives of hundreds of thousands of people helped to secure the decisive majority returned in 1966. After the second sterling crisis in the summer of that year, the further development of social reforms was adversely effected by the costs of the government's crisis policy.

All forms of social benefits were brought under control of a single Ministry of Social Security. Non-contributory benefits replaced national assistance, the National Assistance Board was abolished. Some effort was made to induce 750,000 aged people who had not claimed assistance which was within their rights to do so. About 2,750,000 people received some increases in benefit through these changes, though the minimum standard remained low. A plan to spend £1,000 million in ten years

on hospitals was published. Progress in the change to comprehensive secondary education was limited by the refusal of the government to provide money for new buildings and sufficient staff. Some housing subsidies were increased, leasehold law was reformed, and a Land Commission set up. A Parliamentary Commissioner was appointed to inquire into complaints of injustice in administration. Racial discrimination in places of public resort was made an offence.

After the third sterling crisis late in 1967, such severe cuts were imposed in the sphere of social services that the Minister resigned. The increased cost of living began to erode the gains of previous benefit increases. A further pensions increase was given. Ministers began to talk about "selectivity" in the accord of social benefits, foreshadowing discrimination and means tests.

Steel was nationalised, on terms which ensured that like other nationalised industries, it would continue to be a source of profit for capitalist investors. Nationalisation of the docks was accepted in principle. Many coalmines were closed down; no adequate measures were taken to find other uses for coal displaced by oil fuel. The Chairman of the National Coal Board estimated that, should the present policy continue, mining manpower would fall from the present 387,000 to 65,000 by 1980. Some larger Beeching rail closures were halted but the run down of branch lines continued. The Post Office was made into a public corporation. All publicly-owned industries, had to raise new capital on the money market, thus being integrated with the private profit system. North Sea gas was left to exploitation by the big monopolies.

State aid to large-scale private industry was increased, reaching £720 million for 1967-68.² Large research and development grants continued to go to the firms producing military aircraft and missiles; a beginning was made in extending such grants to general engineering firms. £62.5 million was promised to the reorganised shipbuilding industry. The Industrial Research Corporation, was formed with a capital of £150 million to speed mergers and structural reform in industry, with power to advance loans and take shares. Among its "notable successes"³ were the mergers of British Motor Holdings with Leylands, and General Electric with Associated Electrical Industries. It "wielded direct or indirect influence"⁴ in the flood of mergers which in January 1968 totalled £1,000 million of capital, as much as in the whole of 1967. A steady stream of further mergers followed including

banking in which the Big Five aim to become the Big Three.

Capitalist spokesmen did not attempt to disguise the fact that a major purpose of the mergers is to cut labour costs by reducing the labour force. Mr. Arnold Weinstock, managing director of General Electric, said in relation to the take-over of AEI:

"We must get 50 per cent more output with 5,000 fewer workers in the AEI telecommunications factories." *The Times* remarked: "There is no point at all in having mergers unless rationalisation, re-deployment of factories and labour, and high productivity result."⁵

A new Commission was set up to examine the structure of local government, and is expected to recommend extensive regionalisation and the two-tier system. The first such regional body, the Greater London Council set up in 1964, and given extensive development powers, has proved a lucrative field for capitalist investors and speculators in land and property.

The Labour Government considerably extended the machinery of the State, forming new Ministries, Boards and Committees. It continued and extended the practice of staffing key positions in the state machine by men from the organisations of big business and the monopolies. The first managing director of the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation was Ronald Grierson, on leave of absence from the City banking firm of Warburg. His successor was Charles Villiers, for twenty years managing director of the City merchant bankers Schoder-Wagg. Lord Melchett was appointed head of the British Steel Corporation. Of the members of the Prices and Incomes Board, the Chairman, Aubrey Jones, was previously a director of Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Ltd., and Chairman of Stavely Industrial (Engineering group); D. A. C. Dewdney, a managing director of Esso Petroleum; P. C. Trench, director of the National Federation of Building Trades Employers; Jasper Knight, a financial director of Unilever Ltd.

World Affairs

The foreign policy of the Labour Government was consistently in line with the interests of American Imperialism, there were regular consultations with the US President and Secretary of State.

The military alliance with the US was maintained, with its commitments to NATO, SEATO, and the cold war, the British military presence on the Rhine and East of Suez. The resultant burden of expenditure, including the purchase of US aircraft and weapons, rose to over £2,000 million a year.

² See Table B on p. 243.

³ *The Times*, 1.2.68.

⁴ *The Times*, 31.1.68.

⁵ *The Times*, 16.2.68.

When de Gaulle raised the question of the role of the Americans in Europe by instructing the NATO headquarters with its Nazi generals, to leave France, the Labour Government offered London as the new seat for the headquarters. It allowed German troops to train in Britain and sent the Queen to Brussels to emphasise British support for the Americans and West Germans.

Wilson's attempt to enter the Common Market, launched in May 1967 in complete contradiction to his earlier denunciation of the Tories for their application to enter, was a failure. It was vetoed by General de Gaulle.

The Government consistently supported the US aggression in Vietnam. The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam had by autumn 1964 liberated two-thirds of the territory and set up its own administration in these areas. American-occupied towns were the scene of repeated anti-American actions. The American reply was to open an air war of destruction against the North, while sending large reinforcements of combat troops with full air and naval support, to the South.

This escalation greatly intensified the popular demand in Britain to dissociate from the US war, but the Labour Government continued its association with US policy. Following Wilson's talk with Johnson late in 1964 it was clear that British support for the US in Vietnam was reciprocity for US support for Britain in Malaysia. Wilson attempted to divert criticism by the pretext that he could not tell what Hanoi really wanted, and sending Harold Davies to find out. But the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had repeatedly made public its demands, and had set them out in a letter to the British Parliament. It wanted the operation of the terms of the Geneva Agreements of 1954—recognition of the independence, sovereignty and unity of Vietnam, and the removal of the American forces.

When the Americans in 1966 admitted that their bombing had extended to the heavily populated quarters of Hanoi and Haiphong, Wilson expressed formal "regret" but reiterated political support for the war. He repeatedly presented the situation as though Johnson was offering a genuine peace and Hanoi unreasonably refusing to accept it.

The Labour Government again and again showed its hostility to the national liberation movements. Among its earliest actions on taking office were allowing Ascension Island to be used by Belgian paratroopers as a staging post en route to the Congo, and its upholding, against the protest of Cheddi Jagan, of the constitution for British Guiana, designed by the Tories to keep the People's Progressive Party out of office.

The threat made in 1964 by the leaders of the Rhodesian white minority unilaterally to declare

independence was denounced by Wilson as "treasonable." Treason is a heinous crime, punishable by death, but when UDI came in November 1965, Wilson took no effective action against it. Verbal denunciations and inadequate sanctions left the Smith régime intact. Repeated declarations that Britain would not use force gave the green light to the white minority to continue to rule by terror and to refuse to enfranchise the black majority, 95 per cent of the population. This racist dictatorship, an affront to the independent African states, was also a military threat to their security since it constituted a potential offensive military alliance with apartheid South Africa and the Portuguese colonialists of Angola and Mozambique.

Majority opinion at the 1966 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference was that Britain should use mandatory sanctions and force to remove Smith, and that no independence should be granted to Rhodesia before majority rule based on one man one vote was established. But Wilson re-opened talks with Smith and offered recognition in return for a formula which allowed indefinite continuation of white minority rule.

The Labour Government tolerated treason in Rhodesia to serve the interests of white property owners against a black people. It broke its pledge to ban arms to South Africa by excluding those under existing contracts and under the secret provisions of the Simonstown military agreement. It tolerated the hatching in London of a conspiracy to oust Nkrumah, the President of Ghana. It continued the operation of the Commonwealth Immigration Act, which in opposition it had denounced as a "surrender to racialism." It rushed through discriminatory legislation to exclude from Britain Indians from Kenya who held British passports and were entitled to enter.

The delicate conscience which prevented the use of force against the Smith régime did not stop the Labour Government from waging full-scale war on the Arab people in Aden and southern Arabia for three and a half years until the strength of the national liberation movement compelled British withdrawal.

First Sterling Crisis Autumn 1964

Immediately on taking office, the Labour Government had to face a legacy of Tory policy, the certainty of a deficit in the balance of payments⁶ at the end of 1964 of between £700 million and £800 million, and heavy selling of the pound in international money markets.

Here was a decisive test. Labour had criticised

⁶ For this and subsequent balance of payments statistics see Table C, p. 244.

the Tories for their handling of such crises, would Labour act differently?

The measures taken were: big foreign loans to support the pound, increase in the bank rate to retain foreign deposits, a levy on imports, longer term measures to restrict consumption at home including dearer money, credit squeeze, and wage restraint.

This was in essence the same policy as that of the Tories, there was no new approach.

The Budgets of autumn 1964 and spring 1965 reflected the cost of these measures and also of the continued commitment to NATO. There was an increase of 6d. in income tax, the workers' weekly insurance contribution was raised, a Selective Employment Tax was devised to take £300 million a year out of public spending, with the declared aim to discourage the employment of non-productive labour. The employer had to pay this tax on every employee, there was provision for refunds and premiums to be decided by the government. The manufacturing industries got the refunds and in some cases also premiums. As the employer was allowed to pass on the tax in increased prices, the results were huge subsidies to big industrial concerns, higher prices for consumer goods and services, and a far-reaching and flexible tax weapon for the state. The heavy hand on the consumer and the public was accompanied by a very light touch on profits, the Corporation Tax and on undistributed profits and the Capital Gains tax fixed at levels which did not make any serious inroads on the total of profits running at some £4,600 million a year.

The government's incomes policy was at first presented with the stress on its voluntary nature, and on the application of restraint to prices as well as earnings. The newly-formed Department of Economic Affairs proposed a ceiling of 3½ per cent for the annual increase in money earnings, a Declaration of Intent to that effect was signed by the Minister, the employers and the trade union leaders. A Prices and Incomes Board was set up to examine claims for increases. In September 1965 legislation was proposed to enforce notification of claims for increases to the PIB.

The national plan produced by the Department of Economic Affairs proposed an annual growth rate of 4 per cent for industrial production. The pattern of measures to deal with the first sterling crisis was followed, and intensified, in later crises. It is therefore useful to see what the measures taken as a whole amounted to.

The price for the foreign loans was a heavy burden of interest and repayment charges. More, it put the foreign bankers in a position of command over British economic and financial policy, since the first obligation was now to redeem the pledges made to them.

The loan charges together with the mounting costs of armaments took an increasing share of every Budget reducing what was available for social services and other needs of the people. The cost of living was increased. In committing itself to this policy the Labour Government put its head into a noose, the other end of which was held by the foreign bankers who could tighten it at will.

Second Sterling Crisis Summer 1966

During 1965 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development published a *Report on Britain* in which it called for a rate of economic growth less than the 4 per cent set by the Department of Economic Affairs. The excess of imports over exports continued, as did military expenditure abroad and overseas and the investment of British capital abroad. The year ended with a balance of payments deficit of £342 million.

The second sterling crisis came in the early summer of 1966 with a new wave of speculation directed to the possible devaluation of the pound.

In July, the Labour Government repeated the pattern of previous measures, this time with more severity. Cuts in consumption amounted to over £500 million, through intensified credit squeeze, higher taxes, cuts in spending by the government, local authorities and nationalised industries. Twelve months of freeze and severe restraint in earnings were made legally enforceable. The National Plan to expand the economy was dropped, in its place was planned restriction and unemployment. The July measures brought the government into open conflict with large sections of the labour movement.

Nominally, the freeze and restraint applied to prices and dividends as well as earnings. In fact there was not equal treatment. On earnings the freeze was total and immediate, applying even to increases already negotiated as they became due, and prohibiting subsequent payments to make good what the workers had lost. Price increases were permitted to meet higher import costs, increased rates, taxes and other charges. Restriction on dividend increases did not mean that shareholders lost an increased profit, it was merely held back and reflected in increased share values which could be realised by selling. As the cost of living rose the freeze became a reduction in real wages.

That freeze and restraint were now legally enforceable by fines or imprisonment struck at the most cherished rights of the trade unions, since the results of free collective bargaining could now be negated by the state through the decisions of the Prices and Incomes Board. The state now had the power, and used it, to peg earnings at a level lower than that obtainable through collective bargaining. Strike action against the state decision would be illegal.

The July measures together with the employers' policies of widespread short time, redundancy and rationalisation which accompanied them, opened the most far-reaching attacks since the war on the people's living standards and on trade union rights.

The period of severe restraint proved to be a continuation of the freeze with a few minor exceptions. The main work of the Prices and Incomes Board was to keep thousands of pounds out of the workers' pay packets by delaying, lessening or outright rejection of claims for wage increases while the cost of living steadily rose. The Board also examined several industries to press for increased productivity mainly at the workers' expense.

Most serious of all results of the July measures for the working class and the trade unions was the sharp rise in unemployment which by the end of 1966 had topped the half million and continued to rise during 1967.

Third Sterling Crisis, Autumn 1967, Devaluation

Success in increasing the cost of living and spreading unemployment did not mean success in relation to the balance of payments. The claim of the government that its policy would lead to ending the deficit proved to be devoid of substance. The autumn of 1967 showed again a worsening balance of trade and the certainty of a heavy deficit in the balance of payments at the end of the year.

The now familiar pattern recurred—heavy selling of sterling despite official support, and the running down of reserves. This time it proved impossible to borrow enough to maintain the pound at the parity of \$2.80 and swearing that it would not devalue; on November 18th the government devalued the pound to \$2.40. The expensive efforts of three years were negated.

But even this massive defeat did not make the government change course. It negotiated enough credit to sustain the pound at the new rate and raised the bank rate to 8 per cent, the highest since 1914. More credit restrictions and more cuts in government spending were imposed and this time the social services were heavily cut.

And again no problem was solved, the balance of payments deficit at the end of 1967 was £540 million and the liabilities to non-sterling bankers abroad the highest on record.

Before the 1968 Budget could reveal the full extent of the new burdens on the people, the currency crisis entered a new phase, speculation on the possible devaluation of the dollar; the method, massive purchases from the gold pool.

Since 1934 the United States had fixed the price of gold at \$35 an ounce and when necessary had

sold gold from its huge stocks at that price. In recent years the US balance of payments has been in deficit, due mainly to the cost of the war in Vietnam, and gold has moved out of the US. When the new wave of purchases from the gold pool developed, the US gold stocks were inadequate to adequately back the amount of dollars held outside the US. To go on selling gold at \$35 an ounce would have led to a collapse.

A full devaluation of the dollar was avoided, at least temporarily, by the device of a two-tier system, whereby the largest central banks bought and sold gold at \$35 an ounce among themselves only, leaving the price to find its own level on the open markets. This arrangement was accompanied by another large credit to Britain, the pound being closely linked to the dollar, and both still liable to further attack.

The Budget of March 1968 proved to be an even stronger dose of the mixture as before. Tax and duty increases of over £1,000 million fell mainly on the people, surtax payers got off with a £100 million levy for one year only. The resultant estimated rise in the cost of living was 7½ per cent but the ceiling of earnings increases was set at 3½ per cent, meaning a further substantial reduction in real wages, while the arms costs and interest payments on debts remained high as ever.

Promise and Performance

A balance-sheet of three and a half years of Labour Government may be drawn by comparing the aims set out in the Labour Party's election manifestos⁷ of 1964 and 1966 with the Government's actions.

The hope was held out of a great change. "Labour's New Thinking" would replace the "outdated philosophy of the Tories." "Whatever the future may bring there can be no turning back to the discredited policies of the Tories which produced 'growing stagnation' 'intermittent bouts of high unemployment' and continual rise in prices."

There has been continuity of Tory policy on the major problems—the economy, the pound, wage restraint, support for the US war on Vietnam, hostility to the national liberation movements. There is still stagnation of the economy, the continual rise in prices, and now unemployment is continuous at a substantial level.

Labour's traditional aims "would become immediate targets of political action." They were defined as "ending of economic privilege, abolition of poverty in the midst of plenty, creation of real equality of opportunity."

In 1967, at one end of the social scale there were

⁷ The phrases in quotation marks are from the 1964 manifesto or that of 1966.

500,000 families, including 1,250,000 children, living on a standard below that of national assistance.⁸ At the other end, the annual income of 170 individuals averaged £168,000 each, totalling £28.5 million,⁹ forty company directors held shares valued at £400 million; ten of the largest companies in Britain were each controlled by a family group.¹⁰

The prices and incomes policy was to be a "weapon specially fashioned for attack" on the rising cost of living and "will apply in an expanding economy to all incomes—to profits, dividends and rents as well as wages and salaries."

Without expansion of the economy, the incomes policy has been applied to effect the reduction of real wages. Prices, taxes and charges are repeatedly raised, and the policy does not apply to profits.

There was a specific pledge "whatever the pressures" to "maintain full employment."

The monthly average of unemployment in Great Britain went up from 1.6 per cent in 1964 to 2.4 per cent in 1967. The number of unemployed rose from 317,000 in August 1966 to 564,200 in December 1966, to 582,000 in December 1967, and over 600,000 in the first months of 1968.¹¹

"In the next five years living standards for the individual and the whole community will rise by 25 per cent."

The official Index of Retail Prices,¹¹ which is so weighted as not to reflect fully the increases in the prices of necessities, showed the following monthly average for all items, taking January 1962 as 100:

1964 ..	107	1966 ..	116.5
1965 ..	112.1	1967 ..	119.4

With earnings frozen or restrained this rise in the cost of living together with tax increases means that there is a fall in living standards.

A national plan would ensure "steady and vigorous expansion of the economy."

The National Plan was never more than a collection of aspirations, and was abandoned after the second sterling crisis in the summer of 1966.

The economy has not vigorously expanded. The official Index of all industrial production,¹¹ taking 1958 as 100, was:

1964 ..	128.2	1966 ..	133.4
1965 ..	131.9	1967 ..	133.1

The pledge was that "housing, schools and hospitals" "whatever the pressures" would be exempt from cut-backs in public expenditure; there would be a "completely free health service"; and a "revolution in our education system to

ensure the education of all our citizens in the responsibilities of this scientific age."

Funds for school building and free milk in secondary schools have been cut, and an effective change to comprehensive education has been botched by the refusal to provide new buildings and sufficient staff. The charge for Health Service prescriptions has been restored and increased to 2s. 6d. The workers' weekly contribution to National Insurance funds has been increased from 11s. 8d. in October 1964 to 16s. 8d. in May 1968.

Britain was "to strengthen the United Nations as the main instrument for peace in a divided world," to promote nuclear disarmament and "to have a policy for ending the Rhodesian rebellion."

By consistently supporting Johnson, Britain blocked U Thant's efforts to bring the war on Vietnam to an end. Production and purchase from US of nuclear weapons continues. The Smith régime still dictates in Rhodesia.

The 1966 manifesto declared Labour's "over-riding aims" to be "the pursuit of solvency and the defence of the pound." It also stated "it is our aim to achieve balance in our international payments by the end of the year."

The pound, devalued in November 1967, is still in danger at the new parity of \$2.40, and the costs of the struggle to defend it as an international reserve currency have still to be met.

From 1964 to 1967 Britain's external liabilities steeply increased. The debts to International Monetary organisations rose from £991 million to £1,540 million; those to non-sterling countries rose from £717 million to £1,368 million.¹¹

The gold and currency reserves¹¹ also increased from £827 million in 1964 to £1,123 million at the new parity in 1967, but this increase was not sufficient to keep pace with the rise in liabilities to non-sterling countries which at the end of 1967 substantially exceeded the reserves.

The figures of the balance of payments show no sign of improvement.

For the years 1965-66-67 the average was: balance of trade, deficit £359 million; balance of payments, deficit £338 million.

Comparison of these figures with preceding three-year periods should give an indication of whether the Labour Government's policy has effected any improvement.

Should the four-year cycle,¹² through which the balance of trade has passed since 1947, continue, the comparative period would be 1961-62-63, when the yearly average was: balance of trade, deficit £113 million; balance of payments, surplus £63 million.

⁸ Report on Circumstances of Families, HMSO, July 1967.

⁹ Report of Commissioners of Inland Revenue.

¹⁰ The Times, 15.12.67.

¹¹ Monthly Digest of Statistics, CSO, Feb. 1968.

¹² See Guide to Balance of Payments by Tom Drinkwater.

For the four-year cycle which ended in 1964, the yearly averages were: balance of trade, deficit £221 million; balance of payments, deficit £178 million.

For the three years 1962-63-64, the yearly averages were: balance of trade, deficit £243 million; balance of payments, deficit £262 million.

For these periods, the average deficits (See Table A) may be compared.

Whatever years are selected for comparison, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that three years of the application by the Labour Government of the traditional Tory policy have disastrously failed to make any improvement. With the continuation of this policy, and taking into account that devaluation means we pay more for our imports and may get less for our exports, no trend has yet appeared which gives us a basis for expectancy for a satisfactory change in the balance of payments for 1968.

The Labour Government has failed to achieve the "over-riding aims" for which it abandoned its election pledges.

II. THE ROOTS OF RIGHT-WING POLICY

How did the Labour Government arrive at this position of negating its election promises, and acting counter to the aims, aspirations and decisions of the labour movement? Why does it persist in this course?

Its apologists talk about accidents, bad luck, unforeseen circumstances, being "blown off course" and so on, but such things can only play a minor part. The decisive factor in determining what a government does and how it responds to pressures and circumstances can only be the political thinking of those leading it.

The political thinking of the right-wing leaders is revealed in the labour election manifestos of 1964 and 1966, particularly the latter.

These manifestos present a detailed picture of a new and better Britain with far-reaching improvements in the conditions of the people. They detail a series of reforms which will bring about this better Britain. They explain that these reforms will be paid for out of increased productivity.

Monopoly Capitalism Continued

There is no proposal to curb, much less end, the power of Big Business. There is no proposal to end the exploitation of labour for capitalist profit. The assumption is that capitalism will continue, the only revolution will be in technology.

There are specific proposals "to stimulate rationalisation, modernisation and expansion" of British industry, and where necessary to give state aid to increase its competitive power as against

the "giant firms of the US and Europe." As the decisive sections of British industry are in the hands of big business, these proposals can only mean assisting the further growth and domination of monopoly capital.

The manifestos speak of the "mixed economy," meaning that part is privately owned and part publicly owned. But the conditions of the present form of public ownership means that this sector is also a sphere of capitalist investment and capitalist profit, and there is no proposal to change this state of affairs.

Turning to foreign affairs, the manifestos made clear that the alliance with America will continue, as will the commitments to NATO, the nuclear deterrent and British military striking power overseas.

Taken together, the home and foreign policy proposals show that the right-wing leaders consciously intended, not only to continue British capitalism, but to actively use the state to strengthen its large-scale organisation at home and its competitive and military power abroad.

To the people, the promise of these manifestos was that the state, once guided by the benign wisdom of the labour leaders, would ensure that production and exports rise, let the capitalists have more profit and the people higher living standards.

To give this picture credibility, the realities of politics today have to be ignored. So the class struggle, the exploitation of labour for capitalist profit, imperialism, the general crisis of capitalism, are either banished from the manifestos or so disguised as to be unrecognisable.

The nation is presented as a community in which the differing interests of classes can be resolved by a common policy. The state, presented as neutral above the classes, can reconcile them by giving each a square deal. The reality in our class divided society is that because the primary purpose of production is capitalist profit and the accumulation of new capital, the capitalists and the workers have always differing views as to what is a reasonable level of earnings, purchasing power and living conditions.

The manifestos present imperialism as a thing of the past. The reality is that the leading capitalist powers of today, including Britain, pursue imperialist aims with all the strength they can muster. They use force or financial penetration, according to circumstances, to extract heavy profit from the labour of peoples abroad.

The manifestos present the problem of exports as though its solution depended entirely on the amount produced at home, the reality is that there is increasingly acute competition for the available export markets.

The difficulty in deciding what is Britain's role in the world of today is presented as though it

arose from the out-dated ideas of the Tories. In reality it reflects the deepening crisis of imperialism in decline and in retreat before the rising forces of socialism, national liberation and democracy.

Realities Take Charge

However skilfully the right wing in their manifestos avoided political realities, the moment the Labour Government assumed office, it was realities which took charge, and the government had to respond to their pressure. One of the earliest and rudest was the sterling crisis in the autumn of 1964.

The government acted as though the only problem was to secure a favourable balance of trade, and that this could be done by an increase of exports. In fact the military expenditure abroad, the export of capital, and the steadily increasing remittance of profit on foreign capital invested in Britain also made important contributions to the deficit in the balance of payments.

Military expenditure abroad was primarily to secure or protect investments. The costs at an earlier period were charged to colonial governments, now they have to be met by the British taxpayer, while the profits on the investments go to capitalist investors. In recent years these profits have reached record heights. These investments and the high profits accruing from them are essential aspects of imperialism.

To secure a healthy balance of payments, healthy in the sense that it reflected the national interests, an all-round change of policy is necessary—decreased imports by cutting inessentials; increased exports; eliminating military expenditure abroad; limiting investment of private capital abroad; and controlling foreign investment in Britain.

What the government did was to concentrate on reducing the people's purchasing power, allegedly to make more production available for export, while allowing the export of capital and the military expenditure abroad to continue practically unchecked. The people paid by increased taxes and cost of living, frozen earnings and unemployment; capitalist profit continued.

Thus the Labour Government made its choice: it decided to defend the pound of Big Business at the expense of the purchasing power of the pound of the people.

The effort to maintain the pound as a medium for the City's profitable financial operations abroad and as an element in the alliance of British and American imperialism did not solve the balance of payments problem nor serve the interests of the nation. It benefited Big Business and in doing so resulted in the abandonment of labour's election pledges and betrayal of the trust of those who voted labour.

Warning of Previous Experiences

The right wing cannot plead being taken by surprise for the experience of previous labour governments is on record.

In 1924 the first labour government led by Ramsay MacDonald did better than the Tories on housing but was no different on unemployment or nationalisation. Its hostility to trade union demands for wage increases led Ernest Bevin to remark: "I only wish it had been a Tory government in office."

The government was hostile to national independence movements, it imprisoned Indian leaders and bombed Iraqi peasants. It prosecuted the editor of the *Workers Weekly*, forerunner of the *Daily Worker*, for alleged sedition, and fell when the Liberals objected to the withdrawal of the prosecution. A factor in its loss of the subsequent general election was the credence given by MacDonald to a forged letter conveying instructions from the Communist International for subversive activities in Britain.

The Labour Party made no serious study of the actions of this government, excusing it on the grounds of inexperience and dependence on the Liberal vote in the House.

While the first labour government ended in fiasco, the second, in 1929-31, again led by MacDonald, ended in disaster.

It repeated the hostility of its predecessor to the wage struggle of the trade unions and did nothing to remedy unemployment. It held 60,000 Indian nationalists in jail, and imprisoned British trade unionists who had gone to India to help organise the Indian workers. It fired on African strikers in the Gambia and the Gold Coast.

When the capitalist world economic crisis worsened, the government devalued the pound and then split over the demand of the US bankers for an all-round 10 per cent cut in benefits and wages. MacDonald broke away to form a "National Labour" group, and when labour lost the election, became Prime Minister in a so-called "National" government of the Tories and his break-away group.

Again the Labour Party failed to analyse what had happened, it was easier to express indignation at treachery than to search out its political roots.

The third labour government, with Atlee as Prime Minister, was elected in 1945 with a decisive majority. It nationalised coal, gas, electricity, rails, part of road transport and later steel, on terms which kept them within the system of capitalist profit. It conceded Indian independence because sufficient force was not available to deal with the Indian revolt; labour's election manifesto had said nothing about independence for India. Force was

used ruthlessly against the Malayan independence movement. No African people was accorded independence, repression was combined with constitutional manoeuvres to create divisions and bring forward pro-imperialist elements.

In contradiction to its election promises the government joined with the Americans in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation with its cold war, nuclear strategy and West German rearmament directed against the socialist countries. This was Churchill's policy. The cost of the arms programme to sustain it and the export of capital to replace investments conceded to the US during the war, led to a drive against wage increases and imposition of austerity at home. The pound was devalued. Unpopularity of wage restraint and austerity and the halt in social legislation led to a much reduced majority in 1950 and defeat the following year.

Common Pattern

All previous labour governments, and that of 1964-68, have been dominated by right-wing leaders and a common pattern can be seen in their practice.

Labour out of office appeals for votes on the basis of social reforms, ending Tory abuses, and improving the people's conditions, but makes no basic exposure of the nature of the capitalist system and its political institutions, and no proposal to change them.

Labour in office has to face the realities ignored in its election pledges, and limits its reforms to what is possible while assuring the continuance of the profits and power of Big Business. Foreign policy is in the interests of imperialism and against the socialist countries and the national liberation movements.

The financial burdens of these policies are placed on the people, the scope and rights of the trade unions are restricted, the government comes into conflict with the labour movement and those who voted for it. Right-wing policy leads to the frustration and defeat of the labour movement.

The root ideas which hold the minds of the right-wing leaders have been fully analysed,¹⁴ it will suffice here to summarise them.

They consider that the labour movement should restrict its aims to social reforms capable of realisation within the framework of capitalism, and that such realisation is subject to the over-riding necessity of maintaining capitalism.

The achievement of reforms is dependent on capitalist prosperity, because if this is not secured, the reforms "cannot be afforded."

Capitalist prosperity requires uninterrupted and adequate profits on capital, and the accumulation

of further capital, that is the expansion of the capitalist system. When this in turn requires armaments, military operations or repression, then they must be provided.

To keep the system going and to secure reforms needs joint efforts by labour and capital. The labour movement should therefore collaborate with the capitalists to assure prosperity and should return a labour government which will legislate reforms.

The right-wing leaders reject ideas of class struggle to secure gains for the workers, or to end capitalist exploitation of labour and establish a socialist society. They not only reject such ideas, but see in them a danger to be fought by all possible means.

That right-wing labour governments abandon their election pledges and come into conflict with the labour movement is not due to accident or force of circumstance but is the necessary outcome of their commitment to capitalism and their rejection of socialism.

The present Labour Government has gone further on this road than its predecessors did. It is making more use of the state power and its resources to strengthen monopolies, subordinate state planning and public ownership to monopoly interests, and speed the rationalisation of big industry, not only through the use of new techniques but also by structural changes. It is making greater inroads on democratic rights and practices to enforce lower standards of living. As a consequence the results of right-wing policy are becoming clear to millions of workers.

Labour's alternative to the disastrous policy of the right wing is not to abstain or return to Tory rule, but to end right-wing domination and go forward to a government formed by the labour movement with a new, socialist policy. Forces on the left capable of making these changes are now beginning to emerge.

III. THE RISING MASS MOVEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR A LEFT POLICY

The course of events since the decisive labour majority of 1966 has made a great impact on the working people and on public opinion. The workers are showing their opposition to the government's policies by a series of protests, demonstrations and strikes, and the demand for a new policy is steadily growing. There is also inevitably much confusion and disillusionment. The great positive development is the leftward turn among the organised workers and in their trade unions, reflected to some extent in the Labour Party, and accompanied by a coming towards a common political position of left labour, socialist and communist forces who seek a solution

¹⁴ See *The British Political System* by John Gollan and *Right Wing Labour* by Emile Burns.

of the crisis in the interests of the people and not of big business.

The Trade Unions

The strongest force in the rising movement is the organised industrial and professional workers, large numbers of whom have always opposed wage restraint and interference with trade union rights. The strength of this opposition has compelled the General Council of the Trades Union Congress to exercise caution in its support of the government's economic policy.

The official strike of the seamen in May 1966 revealed the change maturing in the trade unions, for the seamen's union had for decades been in the hands of extreme right-wing leaders. The government's reaction to the strike made clear that it would in no way help even an official strike; it used public denunciation, emergency powers and the red bogey in its efforts to divide and intimidate the seamen and their executive, and it failed.

The tightening of the incomes policy in July 1966 caused the resignation from the government and from Parliament of Frank Cousins, leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and was followed by numerous demonstrations and strikes. Scores of thousands of motor workers, dockers, railmen, builders, printers, electricians, engineers, road transport men, miners, aircraft, distributive workers took action, as did bank clerks, teachers, draughtsmen and technicians. Outstanding was the strike of the Merseyside dockers early in spring 1968 which compelled the government trouble shooter to accord a minimum wage of £17 a week.

Unity, solidarity, militancy, with remarkable initiative even by inexperienced workers, were features of these actions, whether official or unofficial. The political awareness of the workers was shown in numerous deputations and mass lobbies of Parliament.

Trade union activity on the job was the base of the movement. In many factories substantial, though unpublicised, breaches were made in the earnings standstill. The shop stewards played a leading part in the political as well as the industrial actions, and enterprises with joint interests were linked by combined shop stewards committees.

There was a further growth of trade union opinion in favour of amalgamation, strengthening the relations between the shop stewards and the union committees, ending bans on Communists and lefts, demanding a share in decision-making in industry, and organising the unorganised. Such measures strengthened trade union democracy and helped to secure the full participation of the members in the struggle to advance their interests.

The mass pressure had significant consequences

on trade union policy. The TGWU opposed the whole economic policy of the government, and an alliance of five professional unions campaign publicly for an alternative policy. Other unions joined in total or partial opposition. The voting at the TUC showed the growth of the movement.

At the 1966 TUC the government economic policy, supported by the General Council, was endorsed by narrow majorities, of 344,000 for wage restraint and 747,000 for compulsory powers for the Prices and Incomes Board. Over 4,200,000 votes were cast against both.

The 1967 TUC condemned all aspects of the government's economic policy, mostly without a division, including what was described as "the deliberate creation of unemployment" and "the restrictive and negative incomes policy." It also demanded the repeal of the Prices and Incomes Act. The General Council only ventured to champion the government on one issue, by opposing a resolution condemning deflationary measures, but the resolution was carried by a majority of 1,381,000.

The significance of this rejection of the government's policies was underlined by the adoption of specific proposals for alternatives including: drastic cuts in military expenditure; control of the import and export of capital; national economic planning to maintain full employment, extend public ownership, secure a real growth of wages and salaries with a £15 per week minimum and achieve the forty-hour week, three weeks' paid holiday and equal pay.

By 4,686,000 votes to 3,319,000 the TUC called on the government to dissociate from US policy in Vietnam and to support the ending of the war on the basis of the 1954 Geneva agreements.

The demand for a new policy was accompanied by the election of more left and progressive candidates to trade union committees, and official positions. Most important in such election results was the election of a left-wing President in the Amalgamated Union of Engineers and Foundry Workers, since it opened the way for a democratic expression of this union's policy at the TUC and Labour Party Conference.

The Labour Party

During the period of mini-majority the left in the Parliamentary Labour Party held back from public criticism of the government, but with the decisive majority of 1966 it became more outspoken. In addition to speaking and voting against the government in the closed meetings of parliamentary party, the left published signed statements and articles, criticised in the House, abstained in the voting, and finally voted against the government. The issues on which the left opposed included: government support for the US war on Vietnam;

incomes policy and compulsory powers for it; entry to the Common Market; racial discrimination, cuts in social services. Alarmed at the adverse voting, the right-wing leaders suspended twenty-five MPs from the Parliamentary Party for one month, 126 MPs voted for the suspension, sixty-six voted against.

Over 100 members of the Parliamentary Party have taken part in some form of left criticism, about forty have voted against the government in the House. It should be noted that of the 370 Labour MPs elected, about 130 hold major or minor government positions.

The rise of the trade union left also found expression in the Labour Party and reinforced the left MPs. The trade unions hold the majority of votes at the Labour Party Conference because of the numbers on which they are affiliated. They can therefore decide policy, leadership, and changes in the constitution. Left expression at the Conference has in the past tended to come from a relatively small number of constituency parties and MPs while the big unions usually voted for right-wing policy. The emergence of a number of trade unions consistently voting left opens up a new possibility, a majority for left policy.

The 1966 Labour Party Conference supported the wage freeze legislation by a majority of 2,208,000 but rejected government policy on three other issues. It demanded work-sharing, as against dismissals, by a majority of 152,000, called for big cuts in military expenditure by a majority of 538,000 and for the ending of support for the US war on Vietnam by a majority of 1,217,000.

The 1967 Conference saw a growth of the left vote though it did not follow the TUC in all-round condemnation of the government. Over 3,000,000 votes were cast against government economic policy, the majority for it falling to 122,000. Endorsement of the prices and incomes policy qualified by the demand that prices, rents and dividends be as equally restrained as wages, was carried by a majority of 196,000. The majority for complete dissociation from the Vietnam war was 119,000 and for condemnation of the Greek colonels régime 269,000.

While opposition to government policy grew inside the trade unions and the Labour Party, the parliamentary by-elections and the local elections began to reveal the cessation of activity by the voluntary workers who are the backbone of the labour election machine, and the mass abstention of labour voters.

In April 1967 the previous labour majority of 64 on the Greater London Council was replaced by a Tory majority of 82. In the May local elections Labour lost 385 County Council and 596 Borough Council seats.

Between March 1966 and March 1968 there were

seventeen parliamentary by-elections in which Labour defended twelve seats and lost nine, making no gain. This was a contrast to the results of forty-eight by-elections during 1945-51 when the Labour Government held every seat it defended.

The massive electoral tide against Labour is shown by the fall in the labour vote.¹⁵

The March 1968 by-elections showed a swing which if repeated at a General Election would reduce Labour MPs to the "rump of 1931"¹⁶ about fifty.

Labour losses on this scale are an unprecedented event in British politics, they can only mean that the right-wing policy of the government has broken the traditional unquestioning loyalty of Labour voters.

Since the Labour Party has long made electoral success its main aim, the loss of votes and seats will give a powerful stimulus to far-reaching discussion on policy, in which the left will have the opportunity to win majority support.

For many years the left has limited itself to inner-party discussions and has publicly and at elections identified itself with the right-wing policy adopted by the majority. The right wing has taken advantage of this loyalty to majority decisions to use some left personalities to bolster up its own position by giving them positions in Labour Governments where they have to carry out right-wing policy.

For the present left to gain majority support and to change labour policy, the only way of restoring the party's support among the people, it needs to carry on throughout the party and in public the fight it has begun to make for a new policy.

The Communist Party

Most consistent, constructive and far seeing in the struggle against right-wing domination has long been the Communist Party with its campaign for an alternative, socialist policy for the labour movement.

At the 1961 Communist Party Congress the general secretary, John Gollan, discussing the progressive decisions of the 1960 Labour Party Conference, and the right-wing attack upon them, pointed out that "the right-wing, left-wing conflict is inherent in the structure" of the Labour Party, and "the predominantly petty bourgeois leadership, in alliance with the right-wing trade union bureaucracy has maintained its grip over the mass trade union working-class membership by means of the trade union block vote."

Referring to the fact that "the previous automatic trade union voting for right-wing policies has been shaken" he described this development

¹⁵ See Table E on p. 244.

¹⁶ *The Times*, 29.3.68.

as "a change in the balance of forces in the movement, a challenge to the whole hitherto dominant reformist outlook and ideology of British labour." He went on: "While many left socialists in the past looked on the trade union vote as a barrier to progress, we, on the contrary, advanced the strategic aim of winning the trade unions, the class organisations of the workers, for militant policies. This is now happening."

He described the aim of the right wing in refusing Communist affiliation and imposing bans and prescriptions against the left as being "to transform the structure of the Labour Party, to transform it into a rigid social democratic party." . . . "Yet the mass base and membership of the Labour Party still remains the trade unions, united class bodies of workers with different political views, whose elementary class interests conflict with the political aims of the right-wing leaders."

He gave in concrete and practical terms what was needed to secure working-class unity and the advance of the labour movement:

"To carry forward progressive policies and leadership in the trade unions;

"To end the anti-Communist bans in those unions where they still exist;

"To build up and consolidate a firm and consistent majority of unions supporting socialist policies and with progressive leadership;

"To end the reactionary domination of the General Council and establish a progressive majority;

"To reflect this advance of the unions in the political field especially in the Labour Party and in parliamentary representation."

This perspective gave political purpose to the work of many thousands of Communists in the trade unions and to the daily campaigning of the Party. In the General Elections of 1964 and 1966 the Party stressed that a Labour Government was not enough, a new policy was needed.

The 1966 Communist election manifesto declared that policy was the real issue in the election, "one which would modernise the country in the interests of the people." Setting out the people's needs as "good housing for everyone at low rents; higher wages and longer holidays; stable prices; better education for all the children; decent pensions and proper care for the old; an end to poverty and an assurance of peace" the manifesto claimed that all these could be achieved "if the government solves the economic problems and sets out to use the country's wealth for the common good." It then pointed the way forward:

"Labour says—we have begun to build the new Britain, give us time to complete the job. But with its present programme Labour will never build a new Britain, however long it governs.

"The government must act independently and refuse to give way to the pressure of British and foreign bankers. It must get rid of the enormous financial burden of maintaining troops and bases overseas, and cut down the huge investment abroad which drains away resources needed to modernise our own industry. The arms programme costing £2,172 million a year should be halved. This would release scientific manpower and skilled labour to help rebuild Britain. For this we need an independent policy for peace and disarmament.

"There must be a radical reconstruction of the country's economy to open the way for economic expansion and planning, and the full use of science and technology." This means curbing the power of big business."

At each stage in the movement of events the Communist Party developed the theme of the need for a new policy in terms of immediate demands to meet the needs of the people and explained the necessity of the unity of all left forces.

Simultaneously by the popularisation of its long-term programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, the Communist Party outlines the possibility of a peaceful and democratic transition to socialism, explains how this can be brought about, and shows how the working-class and democratic movements can gather the strength to isolate, weaken and finally overcome the main reactionary forces of monopoly capital. Education in socialist ideas, including the Marxist explanation of the class struggle, the nature of the state, the crisis of imperialism meets an essential need in giving clarity of purpose to the growing movement for a change in labour policy.

The Future of the Left

The great question is—can the left forces unite their efforts, win mass support, and right-wing domination and win the majority of the labour movement for a socialist policy?

It would be wrong to under-estimate the magnitude of the task and equally wrong to under-estimate the magnitude of the opportunity.

Common action of the left does not require the dissolution of existing political parties or the formation of new ones. The struggle for a socialist policy can be waged and won within the existing organisations.

Common action needs a measure of agreement on policy. The policies of the trade union left at the 1967 TUC, of the *Tribune* group of Labour MPs, and of the Communist Party show that there is already much common ground.

Common ground in policy facilitates common action to champion the needs of the people and to struggle with them to secure immediate gains. After the recent experience of the gap between promise and performance, even the most popular

programme, however eloquently presented, cannot be expected to arouse much response unless those putting it forward are seen by their deeds to be with the people in action.

The growing popular will for change is shown by the fact that alongside the traditional forms of industrial and political action by the industrial workers, the protest movements increasingly embrace professional and non-manual workers, civil servants, tenants, mothers, students, young people, schoolchildren. All this provides the opportunity for the left forces to meet the need for leadership and unity of action and thus to become the majority in the labour and democratic movement.

The first need of the people is resistance to any attack on their living standards, or on their social and democratic rights, from wherever it comes. The more united the action the better the prospects of success.

The second need is to go from defensive resistance to organise advance to win higher standards, wider democratic rights and a solution of the crisis in the interests of the people. Since at the root of the crisis is the ownership of the great productive enterprises by monopolies, it can only be solved by taking the key enterprises and institutions into public ownership and democratic control.

The third need is wide understanding of why this socialist solution is essential in order that the immense scientific and technological developments¹⁷ of today can be used to produce in abundance all that the people need and that democracy and humanism can achieve full realisation in a socialist society.

¹⁷ See "The Case for Socialism in the Sixties" by John Gollan.

Table A						
General Election Results						
		March 1966		October 1964		1959
Seats	Lab.	364		Lab.	317	Lab. 258
	Tory	253		Tory	304	Tory 365
	Lib.	12		Lib.	9	Lib. 6
	Others	1				
Votes	Lab.	13.0 m.		Lab.	12.2 m.	Lab. 12.2 m.
	Tory	11.4 m.		Tory	12.0 m.	Tory 13.7 m.
	Lib.	2.3 m.		Lib.	3.1 m.	Lib. 1.6 m.

Note: In the absence of Proportional Representation the number of seats is a distorted reflection of the number of votes cast.

Table B									
State Aid to Private Industry									
									£ m.
Investment Grants	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	154.5
Selective Employment Premium	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	134.3
Regional Employment Premium	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	100.0
Research and Development:									
Military aircraft and missiles	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	173.9
Civil transport aircraft	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	50.0
Other	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	19.5
Development Areas: loans and grants to firms	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	53.9
Industrial Reorganisation Corporation	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15.0
Industrial	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7.3
Other forms of assistance	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14.7
									720.1

Source: *Labour Research*, September 1967—mainly from Estimates 1967-68.

Table C
Summary Balance of Payments

	1964	1965	1966	1967
Visible balance of trade (difference between imports and exports)	-545	-281	-147	-650
Current balance of trade (visible and invisible)	-402	-110	-31	-514
Balance of long-term capital	-374	-232	-102	-26
Balance of Payments (current and long term)	-776	-342	-133	-540

HMSO Cmnd. 3571, March 1968. The 1967 figures are preliminary estimates.

Items on the Balance of Payments

	1964	1965	1966	1967
Government military expenditure abroad (net)	-267	-267	-173	-258
Other Government expenditure abroad (net)	-165	-179	-158	-191

Interest Profits and Dividends

Paid on foreign investments in Britain	490	555	568	600
Received on British investments abroad	899	1,002	967	896

Private Investment

By UK	-406	-356	-292	-363
In UK	+148	+208	+272	+391

Sources: *UK Balance of Payments 1967*, HMSO and *Preliminary Estimates Balance of Payments*, Cmnd. 3571. HMSO.

Table D

Yearly Averages

<i>Period</i>	<i>Balance of Trade</i>	<i>Balance of Payments</i>
<i>Tory Government</i>		
1961-62-63	Deficit £113 m.	Surplus £63 m.
1961-62-63-64	Deficit £221 m.	Deficit £178 m.
1962-63-64	Deficit £243 m.	Deficit £262 m.
<i>Labour Government</i>		
1965-66-67	Deficit £359 m.	Deficit £338 m.

Table E

Greater London Council Elections

	<i>Labour Vote</i>	<i>Labour Seats</i>
1964	1,095,271	64
1967	755,826	18

Parliamentary By-elections

	<i>Labour vote at 1966 General Election</i>	<i>Labour vote at by-election</i>	<i>Labour seats</i>
1966 July			
Carmarthen	21,221	13,743	1 loss
1967 March			
Pollok, Nuneaton, Rhondda, W. Honiton	81,026	52,182	1 loss
1967 September			
Walthamstow W., Cambridge	36,628	21,100	2 losses
1967 November			
Hamilton, Gorton, Leicester, SW.	71,413	44,395	2 losses
1968 March			
Dudley, Meriden, Acton, Warwick	105,286	49,955	3 losses

Frantz Fanon

Willie Thompson

The Author is a Research Student in Economic History at Strathclyde University.

FANON was born on the island of Martinique in 1925 and experienced at first hand the condition of being a "native," i.e. a coloured person, in a colonial society. The exploration and analysis of the personal effects of this condition, formed the subject, somewhat slanted towards Freudian jargon and concepts, of his first book, *Black Skin, White Masks*, published when he was 27. In France he studied medicine, specialising in psychiatric hospital at Blida in Algeria. His experiences there during the revolution, when he was obliged to treat both members of the repressive forces and their victims, and witnessed the diabolical effects of torture on both sides, caused Fanon to become an active participant. He commenced by training Algerian patriots how to control their nervous and physical reactions when engaged in dangerous missions, eventually he served the Provisional Government in a leading diplomatic capacity, particularly in Ghana, where he was able to observe the progress of a colonial revolution very different from the Algerian. In 1961 he was sent to the USA mortally sick with leukemia and died in most distressing circumstances, being left helpless and untended in his hotel room by the Americans until practically in his death agonies.

Fanon's two major works are *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, 1965 (originally *L'An Cinq de la Revolution Algérienne*, 1959) and *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1965 (originally *Les Damnés de la Terre*, 1961) written shortly afterwards. A collection of pieces on the theme of *Towards the African Revolution* was published posthumously in 1964.

Revolutionary Nationality and Consciousness

The *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* might be described as a description and celebration of the creation of a revolutionary nationality and consciousness, and *The Wretched of the Earth* as an investigation of the social forces which were to mould the futures of the emerging African states. Both, like all his writings, are highly polemical in tone. Fanon is not a sober controversialist and he prefers to make his points in broad outline illustrated by a striking example or two, rather than build up his case by massive and elaborate accumulations of statistical detail. The dual insight which he gained as a coloured person and a trained psychologist is always present, and it can be safely said that nothing

else ever written gives an outsider such a vital perception of what it actually feels like to be colonised, despised and regarded as an item of livestock or a feature of the natural environment.

Is the "native lazy, unco-operative and sly, a thief and a liar?" Yes, says Fanon, of course he is, in the absence of political resistance, these are the only weapons he can use to sabotage the colonial machine. Then again, the "native" is described as backward, and not only in the economic sense. He is insanely suspicious of modern technique, especially medicine, he clings obstinately to medieval superstitions and modes of behaviour, he inflicts the most senseless and masochistic rigours on his own person, heedless of the well-intentioned advice purveyed by the occupying powers' welfare services. Perfectly true, agrees Fanon, and proceeds to demonstrate that there is every justification for acting thus.

Such considerations form the subject of *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*. The Western ethic (despite the latter-day philosophies of pessimism and decadence) values man, science, progress, culture and spiritual development. That is only for home consumption though. There is of course a total divorce between Western values and the colonial facts of the matter. All state power rests in the last resort on violence, but in the colonies this relation assumes a particularly uninhibited and barefaced character. Colonial rule is violence perpetually and systematically practised against the colonised population.

Having robbed the colonised people of their independence, their land and their bread, having removed them from all possibility of science, progress, culture, etc., imperialism is still not satisfied. It seeks to pulverise their indigenous culture, to make them accept their past as a dark barbarism from which conquest has fortunately rescued them, not only to adopt the oppressor's standards but to confess they fall far short of them and that for the foreseeable future their essential nature is and must remain savage and worthless.

It is not to be wondered at that the "natives" refuse to submit to this spiritual rape and prostitution. But what alternative is there? What other source of values can they turn to? The pre-colonial type of existence is broken, meaningless and obsolete, but it is all they have. The colonised peoples maintain their dignity as best they can by clinging to

the dirty rags of their murdered culture. They emphasise traditions and taboos that have no significance in modern conditions, obscurantist superstitions take on a new lease of life. There is a violent refusal of the oppressors' science and knowledge even when these would be objectively beneficial. The colonialists, according to temperament, wax indignant at the colossal difficulty of teaching these savages anything or else smile indulgently at the quaint folklore.

And so we discover the typical stereotype of the colonial society, primitive, stagnant, unchanging, a race whose only possible use to science or human advancement is to serve as the raw material for anthropological studies.

Man Changes Himself

The theme of the *Studies* is the process by which in changing the world—in this case by revolutionary war—man changes himself. Fanon shows how the Algerian nationality was forged by the demands of the struggle and how the people discovered a capability for the most advanced forms of organisation and developed the ability to use the most up-to-date techniques—and without any assistance at that—when to do so ceased to be a sign of surrender to the alien ethic and became instead a necessary requirement for prosecuting the war. Knowledge and applied science are never accepted simply on their merits, but judged by the company they keep.

Fanon shows this process occurring in four major areas of Algerian society; the treatment of women, family life, communications and medicine. He traces the process by which the Algerians discarded the old protective prejudices and adopted for their own use the devices they had formerly rejected because of their association with the foreign oppressor. The ancient obscurantist values, artificially preserved in the hermetically sealed environment of colonial society, crumble away. A new ethic and a morality is born, one in which national liberation and the revolution become the supreme goals. The natives recover their dignity and intellect. A new man emerges.

From the colonisers' point of view one of the most scandalous of the traditional Algerian practices was the custom of veiling and secluding their women folk. The absence of the veil was a badge proclaiming the acceptance of alien standards, and hence the "liberation of Algerian woman" took its place among the foremost battle cries of the Foreign Legion parachutists and the "Algérie Française" *pièdes noirs*. Eventually the unveiling was accomplished—by the Algerians themselves in the interests of revolutionary effectiveness. The use of women for revolutionary work of one sort or another in the

European quarters of the cities, the presence of female soldiers in the Marquis, made its existence totally redundant. Eventually it was worn or left off according to the exigencies of the situation or the needs of disguise. It had lost its sacred character altogether, and, correspondingly, the position of women in colonial society had been profoundly transformed in a progressive and liberating direction.

Likewise, with family relationships in general. The authoritarian, ritualised patterns and behaviour dissolved when patriotism and the necessities of the revolution rather than patriarchal respect and obedience became the primary consideration of young Algerian men and women, when husbands and wives were separated for long periods and the women left to shift for themselves or, as frequently happened, suffered outrage and torture for the sake of the national cause, when millions were uprooted from their ancestral habitations and herded into concentration camps. Entirely new conceptions of marriage and sexual roles came into existence, based on equality and respect for shared revolutionary endeavour.

Before the outbreak of the revolution in November 1954, few Algerians cared to possess a radio. The official station, "Radio Alger" was the voice of the occupying power, and its programmes, which were in the habit of regularly glorifying the episodes of the European conquest and domination, provided an important cultural cement for the scattered settler population. Algerians remained indifferent.

With the commencement of the armed struggle a burning need was manifest to link the entire people to the movement and provide a country wide news service on the revolutionary progress. This was all the more urgent as the *colons* largely succeeded in suppressing the democratic press in Algeria. The FLN thereupon established its own broadcasting station, "The Voice of Algeria," and Algerian attitudes to the radio were transformed. Listening to the "Voice" and combating the French jamming became an intense, communal, patriotic activity and incredible risks were run to possess a set.

In the forefront of the colonialists' philanthropic self-image and serving as one of the cardinal justifications for his régime, stood his medical services. As indicated, the Algerian attitude was somewhat different. By and large the subject population refused to be treated, and on the rare occasions its members consented to it they did so in the most lackadaisical and reluctant fashion. Not too surprising, when it is remembered that the doctor appeared invariably in the guise of an overlord, usually arrogant and contemptuous, behaving generally like a vet rather than a physician, often being a landlord or other form of direct exploiter into the bargain. Suspicion prevailed that deaths in hospitals were not invariably due to natural

causes, and the less agreeable aspects of treatment were often looked upon as simply another variety of European sadism.

Then the time arrived when medical supplies, next to munitions, were the key to victory. Once more the popular outlook changed dramatically. Desperate courage was employed to procure them against impossible odds. The people enthusiastically directed their attention towards acquiring skill at hygiene and first-aid, and went on to master the most elaborate procedures required to establish a nation-wide medical service.

A Nation is Born

A concluding section of the book deals with a different theme, the passing over of considerable numbers of the European population to service in the revolutionary struggle. It details the invaluable assistance received by the FLN from the most unlikely quarters among the Europeans—the students, the Jewish community, even police officers, and an astonishingly large number of the rural settlers themselves. The political maturity of the FLN at this period is demonstrated by the fact that it could win and use such people, and proves a salutary reminder that, in contrast to what Stokely Carmichael and certain others may assert, any individual, no matter what his class origins may be, can join up with the oppressed class and participate in their struggle. These people too, became Algerians.

So out of the blood and the fire a new people is forged and the nation is born. *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* does not go beyond this point. It does not inspect the fate of the nation after it emerges from the colonial situation.

Parties and Politicians

The Wretched of the Earth takes up from there, and is broader both in political and geographical scope. After a brief initial consideration of the debasement which colonial rule works on native culture and psychology, exemplified in such phenomena as inter-tribal vendettas, animism, etc., Fanon directs his attention to the political trends in the emerging African nations which he sees as most significant for their future. Basically the work might be called a critique of the nationalist parties which evolved during the course of the independence struggle and which usually ended by taking over as the successors to the colonial power, almost universally on a negotiated basis and without open warfare.

Fanon is particularly concerned with what he claims to be the fact that these parties and the politicians who lead them are nearly always based on and draw their strength from the towns and do

not relate in a meaningful fashion to the rural masses. This factor is one major weakness, and alongside it the parties have certain other highly undesirable characteristics. In the minds of the leaders, it is alleged, politics appears primarily as a dialogue with the colonial authorities at the seat of power, with the object of winning a series of concessions within the framework tolerated by the colonialists which lead to a negotiated independence at the end of the road, with black faces substituted for white in the government apparatus, but no other significant changes. In other words these leaders are mainly interested in power and privilege for themselves and their main quarrel with the colonial régime is that it fails to give them a satisfactory share of the booty wrung from the people at large.

These leaders are in fact frauds. They organise the militancy of the masses, at least the urban masses, but they look upon it as their private property, to be turned on or off like a tap, at suitable points in the process of negotiation with the imperial state. They have no intention of conceding any real say in affairs to their followers. They are full of distrust for the countryside, regard it as tribal, chief-ridden, backward and reactionary, believe (on the whole correctly) that in the countryside the colonialists find such popular support as they can count on. When they do give the peasants their attention they try to batter down the obscurantist traditions instead of using them to develop the struggle and in the process weaning the people away from them.

The last thing they try to do is prepare or organise the people for armed struggle, yet frequently they are taken by surprise when it breaks out nevertheless. In that case the town-based nationalist politicians attempt to use the revolt without identifying with it. Perhaps the colonialists throw them into jail all the same, but often enough they hasten to bargain, even to decolonise, before the situation gets entirely out of hand. In which event the nationalist party may even find itself as the government taking over and prosecuting the same repressive anti-popular war as the imperial powers was engaged in before the change-over.

More often, however, what has happened is that the nationalist party achieved its objects without such a distressing eventuality. A new state came into being amid popular rejoicing with its flag, parliament, seat in UNO and all the trappings of national sovereignty.

The bright new image is soon tarnished, however, mutual suspicion remains between the town and the countryside, a great divide separated the governors from the governed, the former in fact are closer in attitude and temperament to the previous masters than to their own subjects.

"Model" of Betrayal

Soon the state is divided, not merely between the new exploiters and those patriots who have the people's true interests at heart and have generally been excluded from office and power, but also between different factions of the ruling group itself, the "ins" who monopolise the sweets of office and the "outs" who desire to lay hold of them. Both these factions try to provide themselves with a political base, and since their aims are careerist and corrupt and so win no popular support, they turn to bargain with the most regressive elements in the rural districts. If the "outs" are making the running in this game we get parties based on chiefs, money-lenders and rich peasants, demanding regional autonomy and tribal independence, endeavouring to circumvent and nullify the central governments power over them. If the "ins" are working the trick, tribal obscurantism is mobilised against revolutionary opponents. Kenya happens to provide a striking example of both processes. In the initial phase the reactionary party KADU opposed the progressive nationalist party KANU on a programme of regional federalism. Defeated in this, KADU merged with KANU, assisted the KANU right wing to expel the progressives from the government which it brought to rely on the same social forces as had formerly supported KADU.

In any event the unity of the nation is disrupted, corruption and cynicism reign in the government, tribalism, superstition and rural idiocy renew their vigour while imperialism comes back triumphant in the shape of neo-colonialism. The entire process of liberation goes into reverse.

This is Fanon's model of how revolutionary hopes are betrayed. When he proceeds to provide an explanation he is quite emphatic that the problem has its roots in the class basis of the nationalist parties, from the fact that they are primarily the creations of the colonial bourgeoisie and its intellectual collaborators.

Colonial Bourgeoisie

In the first place they win popular support by a range of anti-imperialist and even socialist-sounding slogans, but the leaders seldom take these slogans seriously, and hasten to exclude from their parties any persons or groups who actually do so. Nevertheless for a period the interests of the bourgeoisie—expulsion of the occupier—does coincide with the general interest and on this basis independence is won.

But these bourgeoisie have no future, because unlike their European counterparts 150 years ago they are not inventive, industrial and dynamic. They are, on the contrary, weak and corrupt, with an entirely parasitic role. In a world economy

tightly sewn up by imperialist monopolies, and ruling pauperised and fragmented states, they cannot develop as a class by emulating the Japanese and developing a powerful national capitalism. All they can do is exploit the economic channels previously established by imperialism and function as middlemen and Western business agents in the neo-colonial exploitation of the nation. Even when they go in for Africanisation it is not on a progressive basis but merely to secure a monopolistic grip on the national resources and the middleman role. The upshot of their practice is in the long run usually to exploit the people as intensely as the former masters, without even the excuse of developing the national economy by doing so:

"Using two or three slogans these new colonists will demand an enormous amount of work from the agricultural labourers, in the name of the national effort of course." (p. 124.)

It is readily understandable that under pressure of these developments the national consciousness and the national party both go to pieces. Taking their cue from the élite, the labour classes in the towns betray chauvinistic attitudes towards "immigrants"—economic competitors from foreign African states:

"If Europeans get in the way of the intellectuals and business bourgeoisie . . . for the mass of the people in the towns competition is represented principally by Africans of another nation. . . ." (p. 126.)

Regional and tribal exclusiveness flourish and often religious diversion exacerbates the process further. Nigeria is a tragic example of this process. Completely incapable of preserving even national unity, the African bourgeoisie is far less able to create the continental unity to which they pay pious tribute.

Disintegration of Party

Naturally the party disintegrates as well, degenerating into what is at best an arthritic administrative machine and at worst a gangster protection racket. No longer does it express the people's will to any extent at all, it is reduced to serving the state as an instrument of administrative discipline and pronouncement:

"The party helps the government to hold the people down. It becomes more and more clearly anti-democratic, an implement of coercion." (p. 138.)

Even in this shabby task it is not given first place, for lacking the self-confident sophistication and skill of the Western bourgeoisie, the African one rules increasingly by demagoguery and the leadership principle, combined with spectacular demonstrations of force, and the governing caste sinks deeper

into insolence, corruption and arbitrariness. As the popular masses become more and more alienated from the régime, the leader, an heroic figure from the past is brought forward as a national mascot to confuse and distract the people:

"The leader, who has behind him a lifetime of political action and devoted patriotism, constitutes a screen between the people and the rapacious bourgeoisie since he stands surety for the ventures of that caste and closes his eyes to their insolence, their mediocrity and their fundamental immorality. He comes to the aid of the bourgeois caste and hides its manoeuvres from the people. . . . Every time he speaks . . . he calls to mind his often heroic life the struggles he has led . . . and the victories . . . he has achieved, thereby intimating clearly to the masses that they ought to go on putting their trust in him. . . . These men who . . . have taken upon themselves the whole burden of the past . . . find themselves today, alas, at the head of a team of administrators who . . . proclaim that the vocation of their people is obey, to go on obeying and to be obedient to the end of time." (p. 135.)

As the history of the past few years demonstrates however, such gambits fail to save the élite. Incapable of governing on its own merits it depends to an ever-growing degree on the military and police forces and is eventually shoved aside by them.

Fanon has no hesitation in asserting that the only alternative to one version or another of this depressing scenario is for genuinely committed leaders to involve the people deeply in national planning at all levels to cut free from colonial economic ties and to develop the party as a real expression of the people's will, being careful to keep the best party militants separate from administrative functions. The masses must be politically educated and consciously involved and the only way to prevent the army developing Bonapartist longings is to politicise it, to create correct political understanding among the soldiers. Nationalism is a blind alley unless an effective social and economic programme is developed beyond the patriotic slogans. Fanon maintains categorically that the only real lines along which a newly liberated country can advance are socialist ones, and though he does not use the phrase he makes it quite clear that he means scientific socialism.

Points of Criticism

Such is the case presented by Frantz Fanon and it would be idle to deny that events since his death have borne out his analysis to a remarkable degree. Even so, there are points upon which Marxists, while conceding the great strength of his arguments, might wish to voice dissent.

In the first place it is difficult to avoid the impression that in discussing the preconditions for

colonial revolution he gives insufficient weight to circumstances which remain beyond the control of the revolutionaries. It might be assumed on the basis of Fanon's analysis that the only condition necessary to begin the struggle is the cultivation of an appropriate attitude of mind among the people. This rather one-sided emphasis and tendency towards political voluntarism, the suggestion almost that the strength of a revolutionary cause is essentially "in the mind" could be seriously misleading if it caused revolutionaries to ignore objective conditions and convince themselves that the imperialist power was bound to succumb at any time to a sufficiently determined attack. However it is most unlikely that the Algerian revolution could have succeeded twenty years earlier, or that successful revolt will be possible in South Africa until the régime's strength is undermined by its own short-sightedness and more adequate international mobilisation against it.

In regard to international factors although Fanon pays tribute to the assistance rendered by the socialist camp to the colonial revolution, his work appears to lack an appreciation of the fact that it has only been made possible in the first place by the disruption and chaos created in the world imperialist system by the appearance, existence and advance of the socialist states, which have been the indispensable pivot for the anti-imperialist revolutions of the twentieth century. Even more, Fanon ignores or dismisses the contributions made by the organised working class in the metropolitan countries, maintaining that *all* strata of imperialist society have a share in colonial exploitation and that bribery from colonial plunder has hopelessly corrupted them. He values what help they may give to the colonial revolution but does not think it can ever amount to much.

It would be a distortion to imply that Fanon is entirely blind to the necessarily inter-linked nature of the struggle carried out by the socialist states, the working class in imperialist countries and the national liberation movement, but the notice he gives it is pretty perfunctory. There are elements of a narrow "Third Worldism" in his outlook.

Role of Violence

The aspect of Fanon's writings which has undoubtedly excited the most guilty and disapproving fascination on the part of academic commentators is the alleged emphasis on violence and the value of violence against the aggressor as a therapeutic activity in restoring the native's morale and self-respect. The attitude of such people to the colonial situation is, "we support your claims for a better deal of course, but don't get violent or we'll have to disapprove of you." Violence is looked upon by these people as a metaphysical abstraction of evil.

Since bourgeois society legitimises itself on the basis of free agreements and social contract those who are intellectually imprisoned in its ideology cannot bear to know that all class rule is a form of violence and that a movement which renounces its use under all circumstances, far from abolishing it, is merely sanctifying the infliction of *one-sided* violence by the ruling class. Fanon never lets them forget that the violence is there already and the only question at issue is its direction.

All the same he would seem to go beyond this to argue that the only genuine method of liberation is revolutionary war, and that negotiated political settlements with the colonial power are inevitable betrayals which entrench the middle class in power and lead on to counter-revolution. Although in many cases this claim has been justified by the event it has not, nevertheless, been invariably so. Guinea at least is managing to proceed along this road towards a socialist order of society and in Ghana, for all its weakness the Nkrumah government was by no means entirely discredited or politically bankrupt. Conversely, in Algeria, the prime example in Africa of liberation by revolutionary war did not escape a military coup. Nor does it appear to be impossible, though admittedly very difficult and rare, for a party originally led by middle-class elements to transform itself into a genuinely popular movement carrying through the transformation of the economy and social life that all socialists regard as necessary. Julius Nyerere's TANU is arguably an example of this.

There is evidence for two things. Firstly that something more than revolutionary war is necessary to give a socialist orientation to emerging nations, and secondly that such war may not be essential.

Role of the Working Class

What has to be considered here is surely the role of the working class in the liberation movement and the new nation. Fanon has a very low opinion of its revolutionary capacities, believing that its relatively privileged position vis-à-vis the peasantry and the lumpen-proletariat will keep it quiescent, or at any rate, if independence is to eventuate in socialism, it must be the peasantry and rural proletariat, the most dispossessed class, which assumes the leadership, with the town proletariat playing a subordinate political role. He is very adamant on this point.

It would be arrogant and dogmatic simply to say "Fanon is entirely mistaken on this, his argument is entirely, un-Marxist," but it may certainly be noted that his description of the colonial working class as the social stratum which is "most pampered" by the imperialists is wildly inaccurate. Relatively well off they may be in some cases (though not always)

compared to the absolute destitution in the countryside, but the "most pampered" sections are certainly the immediate tools of the colonial power, soldiers, police, state functionaries and the like together with the trading and mercantile sections most closely involved with the imperialist economy.

In any event, has it not almost always been the case that in nations where socialist revolution has occurred the situation was essentially similar, and that the working class assumed the leadership because it was the most politically advanced and the best organised section of the exploited people, circumstances which often go along with being the most privileged.

Russia in 1917 is far from being an exact parallel with, say, Senegal, in 1968, but the similarities are probably more significant than the differences. Again in Cuba, the revolution's military victory was won in the countryside but its socialist direction was only definitely established once it had also gained the towns and could employ the political experience of the urban working class.

Fanon's conception in this matter must be compared with that of Lenin. With his profound understanding of the absolutely critical importance of the peasantry to the socialist revolution in under-developed countries, Lenin made the keynote of his strategy the link and alliance between proletariat and peasants, with the proletariat always providing the revolutionary initiative and political leadership. It is not any special metaphysical virtue of the proletariat which makes this arrangement necessary, merely the fact that it is this class which handles the sector of the economy and the mode of production which is of over-mastering importance in the life and development of modern communities and ones which are striving to modernise. It is the working class which has its hands on the levers of the future.

Passionate Involvement

However, if these are weaknesses in Fanon, they are the weaknesses of his strength, which rests in his passionate involvement with "the wretched of the earth," the "criminals of want" and a blazing concern for their dignity and human demands. He remains one of the major political theorists of the twentieth century. For Western man his words are salutary. For anyone who reads Fanon with sympathy none of the imperialist myths—the civilising mission, the native's backwardness—can ever again command the slightest flicker of acceptance.

The utter corruption of every human action and relation in the colonial atmosphere is exposed brilliantly. For the peoples of the dispossessed nations not only in Africa, but in Asia and Latin

America too, he was at once an unqualified partisan and at the same time a harsh critic of their shortcomings and of pseudo-revolutionary waffle. At a time like the present, when the colonial revolution is meeting phenomenal difficulties yet still surging

irresistably forward, the mature understanding and commentary which he would have drawn from his mature understanding of it would have been invaluable. It is an immense tragedy he did not survive to continue his work.

Discussion Contributions on :

The National Problem in Britain

B. Ruhemann

IDRIS COX'S thoughtful article on this subject raises a number of questions on which it seems to me desirable that we should seek to gain the greatest possible clarity. He rightly, I think, stresses the rights of the Welsh, the Scots and the English to fulfil their national aspirations; but he seems to me to involve himself quite unnecessarily in at least a verbal contradiction when he denies that they are three nations in their own right. In justification for his rejection of James Reid's formulation Idris quotes Stalin's definition of a nation in the form in which we have all read it time and again without blinking an eyelid in the Lawrence & Wishart edition of *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (1936, reprinted 1940 and 1947, p. 8).

Definition of a Nation

Unfortunately, the definition is there given in a form seriously distorted by a printer's omission (as far as I have been able to ascertain this happened originally in the Russian edition from which the English translation was made) which deprives it of its essential meaning. The complete sentence, as given, for example, in Stalin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, 1946, p. 307, reads:

"A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of *people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture*" (the words in italics are the missing ones in the Lawrence & Wishart edition).

The omission renders the passage almost unintelligible since it fails to bring out the fact that in the author's view the nation is first and foremost a *community of people*. That something more than a merely verbal confusion can arise from this

disastrous printer's error seems to me to be demonstrated in the argument which Idris puts forward on p. 189 (but I feel sure that he is by no means alone in his interpretation).

"As for community of language, this exists only in so far as English has replaced Gaelic in Scotland and Welsh in Wales. A century ago the majority of Welsh inhabitants spoke Welsh. But it has gradually declined until today just over one in four speak the language."

If we look at the complete formulation of the definition we see at once that what is relevant to it is not the language spoken under the influence (composed of both legal compulsion and economic pressure) of another nation, in this case the English, but the *common language on the basis of which the nation was historically formed*. Any intrusion of a foreign language is naturally deleterious to the integrity of a nation, and this is precisely the reason why the language question is such a vitally important part of the national question as a whole. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Welsh nation was historically formed, long before the conquest by Norman England, on the basis of the Welsh language, and that few things have contributed more to the rousing of national feeling than the suppression and erosion of the Welsh language and its gradual replacement by the foreign English language; for this makes it increasingly difficult, even impossible, for all Welsh people fully to enjoy in common the rich and beautiful heritage of their national culture.

One part of Idris's case is thus seen to rest on a faulty rendering of the essence of Stalin's definition; it does not seem to me, either, that he does full justice to Lenin's point of view on the matter when he claims that "Lenin often emphasised that the birth of nations takes place with developments

towards a capitalist society" (p. 188). I may not have read 100 per cent of everything that Lenin wrote on the subject, but I certainly have not come across this expression *even once*. I doubt whether this journalistic catchphrase "birth of a nation" even had any currency at the time; I have not encountered it until after the last war, when it served greatly to confuse the issue. What Lenin *did* say, and said *often*, is, by contrast, exceedingly precise and clear; for example:

"The epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Western continental Europe embraces a fairly definite period, approximately from 1789 to 1871. This was precisely the period of national movements and the creation of national *states*. When this period drew to a close Western Europe had been transformed into a settled system of bourgeois *states*, which, as a general rule, were uniform national *states*." (*The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, 1914, quoted from *Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism*, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, p. 73. Emphasis mine, B.R.)

Nation and State

Lenin here speaks quite clearly of the creation of national *states* which presupposes the prior existence of the nations. To say that he ascribes the "birth of nations" to the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions is to accuse him of confusing the nation with the state, an accusation which could hardly be sustained in view of the extreme care that Lenin always took to clear away all possible sources of confusion. If we follow him we will have no difficulty in acknowledging that the Welsh, the Scots and the English are the three major nations of which the population of the island of Great Britain is composed.

But if we follow Idris's argument that the Welsh and Scots are not nations in their own right on the grounds that "they have become part of a British imperialist system and not separate nations" we would lay ourselves open to the reproach that we are confusing the people with the political system, with the state which is the instrument of their subjection. What we should say, in Lenin's terms, is that the incorporation of the Welsh and Scottish nations in the English state, as second-class nations to the English nation, deprived them of the possibility of creating their own national states.

Idris finds that this state of affairs has not been to the advantage of the Welsh and Scottish nations, for their economic life has "been weakened and disrupted from a Welsh and Scottish standpoint by the integration into the economic life of Britain as a whole" (p. 189). But should we use this undeniable fact to prove that in the sense of the distorted

definition they are not nations? Or would it not be better to realise that it is the basic mainspring of the national movements in Scotland and Wales, a classical case which proves Lenin's contention that "deep economic factors underlie the urge to form a national state" (in the booklet already quoted, p. 63).

Lenin specifically approved of Kautsky's remark that "states of mixed national composition (known as multi-national states as distinct from national states) are 'always those whose internal constitution has for some reason or other remained abnormal or underdeveloped' (backward)" (ibid, p. 64). Does not this description hit the nail on the head as far as Britain is concerned, and would not Idris here find a much more consistently Marxist-Leninist case for his contention that the English should have their own Parliament as well as the Welsh and the Scots? For if they were not separate nations there would be no case at all for separate parliaments for any of them; only if we admit frankly that they are is there a case for all of them equally, to free themselves of this backwardness.

Britain or England?

Lastly, when Idris claims that Scotland and Wales are in an exceptional position and not a classical case of national oppression because they are "part of the exploiting and oppressive machinery of imperialism" (pp. 189 and 190) he not only confuses again the nation with the state but he accepts the theory of the leading Tories, notably Scottish Tories, that Britain has somehow replaced England as a nation. This concept was particularly assiduously fostered by Mr. MacMillan when he was Prime Minister, in company with his close associates Sir Alec Douglas Home and Mr. Duncan Sandys. Perhaps we should think more carefully before we take a position which would make of the Scottish and Welsh nationalists a greater enemy than the Scottish hereditary aristocracy and its bourgeois hangers-on. After all, this is the characteristic feature of imperialism that it always seeks, and very often finds, sections and classes in the oppressed nations which it can enlist as junior partners (or "quislings"). Equally, as a rule, national movements arise in opposition both to the imperialist ruling classes of the dominant nation and to the quislings in the oppressed nations themselves; one would like to see an examination of the significance of the Welsh and Scottish national movements in this particular respect.

Naturally, we do not overestimate the difference in the "democracy" of different exploiting classes; but our demands should be for working-class democracy. That also has been formulated in rela-

tion to the national question by Lenin with exemplary clarity:

"The proletariat demands a democracy that *rules out* the forcible retention of any one of the nations within the bounds of the state." (*The National Programme of the RSDLP*, 1913, quoted in the above-mentioned booklet, p. 19. Lenin's emphasis.)

Of course, nearly fifty years have gone by since Lenin wrote; but has not all history since then demonstrated how right he was? From his point

of view we must, I think, support James Reid rather than Idris on this particular point. But I also think that it is obligatory upon Marxists today to re-examine this whole question in the light of the history that has gone by as well as the particular circumstances of the case of the nations of Britain. Before we can undertake this, however, I feel it is most necessary that we should acquire a very clear and precise understanding of Lenin's own position so that we are properly equipped to develop it further.

Bert Ward

WELSH and Scottish nationalism is an issue that the majority of Communist Party members have not really discussed, and yet it contains great potentialities for disruption within the British Labour Movement.

Communist Party policy favours National Parliaments for Scotland and Wales. The *Morning Star* and *Labour Monthly* recently carried articles by Scottish and Welsh Nationalists and the Secretaries of the Scottish and Welsh Communist Parties. Reading these articles aroused within me grave doubts about Communist Party policy on this issue. So I turned to an article which I assume to be authoritative, by Bert Pearce, Welsh District Secretary, *The National Future of Scotland and Wales* in the November 1967 issue of *Marxism Today*. I would like to express my views on this article.

Bert Pearce writes:

"This article, partly based on material from a Communist Party Executive discussion in July, will, it is hoped, lead to much wider argument and so to better understanding and more vigorous campaigning on issues which are important for the movement generally and not only in Scotland and Wales."

If this article contains the Executive Committee's justification for National Parliaments, it is inadequate. In some places it is vague, in others contradictory and the conclusions are not always justified by the preceding argument.

Scottish and Welsh Parliaments

Before I take up some of the points that are made I wish to say that the Marxist attitude to nationalism, as I understand it, is that within a country nationalism is a unifying factor, whilst externally it is a divisive factor. This is to say that internally nationalism unites the exploiting and exploited classes against external enemies. At the same time it divides the working class into national groupings. The ruling classes use the idea of nationalism for their own class purposes, and Marxists attempt to do similarly.

The precise strategy and tactics vary with time, place and circumstances.

It is my opinion that there is no case for Scottish and Welsh Parliaments other than the nationalist case. This policy will therefore divide the British working class, not strengthen the Labour movement as Bert Pearce asserts, but fails to prove.

In the section "Historical Background" he writes:

"Today, in the new epoch of rising Socialist societies, we see the growth of new Socialist nations . . ."

Since it seems that this somehow justifies Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, can we be told what, precisely, the statement means, with examples of these new Socialist nations.

National Consciousness

In the section "Imperialism and the Revival of National Consciousness", after giving reasons to show that "England, Scotland and Wales developed increasingly as one" we are told:

"On the other hand stands the unquestionable survival throughout this long period, of a distinct Scottish and Welsh nationality, so that today, despite these centuries of political unity and closely integrated development, there is a growing national consciousness amongst all sections of the Welsh and Scottish people."

It seems that we are here being invited to draw the conclusion that the survival of the idea is the cause of the growing national consciousness.

In the section "Post War Developments" Bert Pearce writes "The most marked growth of national political expression has been in the last two years".

Why in the last two years? Why not earlier?

He gives three causes:

1. the pattern of unequal development—to the detriment of Wales and Scotland.
2. the increasing need for regional forms of planning and local government.
3. deep disillusionment with right-wing Labour policies, both in national and local affairs.

Are we therefore to conclude that if these three causes did not exist there would be no growth in national consciousness? If so what has happened to the earlier conclusion that the survival of the idea of nationalism "despite centuries of political unity and closely integrated development", is a cause. And what is the relevance of this point, unless it is included to justify a predetermined conclusion.

It is the economic facts of life and not the national idea that are at the basis of the Nationalist Parties recent growth, and Bert Pearce has shown that he knows it.

And if this is so then it is economic policies, not nationalist policies that are the answer.

Institutions

This still leaves us with the question of institutions.

As his second "cause" Pearce's article gives "the increasing need for regional forms of planning and local government".

I do not think that this is a *cause*. The regional unemployment and other economic and social effects of the central government's economic policies are the *causes*. A change in policy is the remedy and this may require regional planning and regional institutions.

But should these regional institutions have a national connotation? Pearce is going to say "yes" and his reason is to be found in his first "cause".

"the pattern of unequal development still persists—to the detriment of Wales and Scotland".

Is it only Wales and Scotland that are blighted in this way? Of course not. There are areas of England similarly affected, as he tells us elsewhere in his article. So on this argument there is a need for regional institutions in England in addition to Wales and Scotland. These institutions would draw up their regional plans which would fit into a national plan.

But this is not what he is arguing for. He wants Welsh and Scottish Parliaments. Listen to this in his section "Scottish and Welsh Parliaments":

"It is sometimes felt that the chief function of a Parliament would be to symbolise and express the spiritual and cultural unity of the nation".

Do you hear that? "It is sometimes felt" . . . "the spiritual unity of the nation".

Who sometimes feels that the function of Parliament is to express the spiritual unity of the nation? The Welsh workers? The Welsh miners? Did they feel this spiritual unity with the Welsh mineowners? When? 1926?

Of course today it is the National Coal Board. If it is argued that the National Coal Board is an English institution then the Welsh and Scottish

miners can vent their national feelings. But what do their English mining comrades do?

Is this the reason that the British Labour movement since the 19th century has sought representation in Parliament? To express their spiritual unity with their employers? Or is it in order to achieve political power with which to defend themselves *against* their employers?

Of course Pearce does not commit himself. "It is sometimes felt" does not mean that he contributes to this notion. On the other hand, neither does he dissociate himself. At the same time he does argue in favour of a Welsh Parliament. He must explain the meaning of that phrase "It is sometimes felt . . ."

Three Separate Countries?

The specific proposals that he does make will result in three separate countries. There will be a Parliament, Cabinet, departments, "machinery and powers for co-ordinated planning and control" of the economy. Each country would become "an integrated economic unit".

The Communist Party policy will "involve an extension of public ownership".

But supposing that the Welsh Parliament has an anti-communist majority, what then? Or isn't that possible?

Yes, it is possible? See the section "Communist Policy". "The demand for self-government and Parliaments for Scotland and Wales has been our policy for many years" and further on "our Party has done too little to launch serious campaigning for these demands or, in particular, to win the Labour movement for them."

There are two main reasons for this.

1. A strong tendency to think of a Welsh (or Scottish) Parliament as impracticable under capitalism.
2. The view that any real struggle for self-government would lead to a division of the working class and progressive forces, weakening their fight for immediate demands, and diverting them from the main line of struggle for Socialism.

Bert Pearce disagrees with point two.

Point one shows that capitalist majorities are possible. He then goes on to say that if the Communist Party and other sections of the working-class movement do not lead on the issue of national parliaments then petty bourgeois elements will. "This is a danger today." Now why is this a danger? Let us assume, for the sake of the argument, that the demand for National Parliaments is a wrong policy. Would Bert Pearce still say that the Party should lead in order to avoid the danger of the leadership falling into the wrong hands? Of course not. He can only argue in this way because he is convinced that National Parliaments are the correct policy. That is what he is really concerned about.

Have I misunderstood him? Then read on—(and I summarise) without working-class participation the nationalist movement will be ineffective. And there is the crux of the matter. The most important thing is for the national movement to be effective. And the rest of the argument? Mere dissembling.

The fact that the national idea can be used to divide the people is no reason in itself for the Party and working class to embrace that idea—as Bert Pearce is well aware.

I challenge his statement that it is possible to create three viable economies in Britain (Section on Scottish and Welsh Parliaments). Present-day production methods require large-scale production. Britain is large enough to have a viable economy. Three separate viable economies are impossible. If his view cannot be sustained with economic data, then his case for three Parliaments, Governments

and “integrated economies” is unrealistic and impractical.

Starting at the End

Bert Pearce's article is intended to vindicate the policy of Welsh and Scottish Parliaments. In fact it does the opposite. If it is read carefully it damns the whole concept.

It seems to me that Bert Pearce did not start with the problems of Britain and work towards a solution. He started with the solution, National Parliaments, and attempted to prove this to be a correct policy. But because he has no solid factual basis he fails. His arguments are not consistent and regrettably, perhaps inevitably, the article has nationalist undertones. And this carries its own dangers, because once nationalist emotions are unleashed we will be riding a tiger.

Honor Arundel

I DO not feel it is really very useful to have an academic discussion as to whether or not Scotland is a nation in terms of Stalin's formulation. I doubt whether Israel would qualify either.

Because at the present time a majority of Scots do want some sort of self-government; they do feel that they are a nation and according to Gallup polls 43 per cent will vote SNP at the next election.

But I do agree with Idris Cox when he says that if we accept Scotland's right to be a nation we must logically press for a truly independent government and a separate Labour Party and Communist Party. I think we must.

Both Tory and Labour are trying to use the smear word “separatism”—as if any small country would not have to co-operate with its nearest neighbours, economically, culturally and politically. A recent investigation by *The Scotsman* shows that Scotland could have a perfectly viable economy—a good deal better than Eire for instance.

There are two possibilities. One is for Home Rule, which means in fact regional administration. Westminster would continue to make the over-all decisions. A Scottish parliament would carry them out. This would be a great advance on the present system but it has little to do with national independence.

For how is it possible for home and foreign

affairs to be separated? If a government in Westminster insists on staying in NATO, backing America in Vietnam, selling arms to the Nigerians, allowing foreign bases in Britain, how can a programme of improved social services and education, etc. be put into operation?

The second possibility is for real political independence when a Scottish government could immediately get out of NATO, remove the Polaris bases, make individual trading agreements, direct industry, nationalise the big estates and provide incentives for the 45,000 Scots who emigrate annually to stay and work in their own country.

So far the *British Road to Socialism* has been vague and equivocal on this national question. It speaks of “gratifying the national aspirations” of Scotland and Wales. It speaks of Scottish and Welsh parliaments. But it does not appear to envisage any real change in Westminster. If our aim is federalism why not say so? In that case there would be three parliaments with an assembly of delegates from all three countries to decide over-all policy. The omission of calling for an English parliament may be charming humility but I very much doubt it.

In my view an independent Scottish parliament must first be elected so that the people can decide to what degree they want to be linked with the United Kingdom.

Free Speech

Olive Arnot

FREE speech and freedom of the press are catch words that litter the pages of newspapers and journals, of letters to the press and which in particular pour out from the pens of the "literati" such as writers, journalists and university pundits.

It seems to be taken for granted at times even in our own press that we have the great blessing of freedom of speech and of the press and that the poor benighted inhabitants of socialist countries have yet to learn from us how to achieve these blessings.

Is it not time that we looked again at the meaning of these words?

What is this free speech we understand so well? It is free speech for Cecil King and Lord Thomson. It is free speech requiring a lawyer for every publication, book, magazine, newspaper or bookseller to see that they are not ruined by libel actions. It is free speech requiring vast sums of money to publish newspapers and periodicals—or else deep devotion to our cause. And free speech to publish any anti-communist, anti-Soviet slanders. Free speech where halls can be, and are, refused for political reasons or made almost unobtainable by the high rents demanded for them.

This is bourgeois free speech. In the Socialist countries it is proletarian free speech (and may I say proletarian is an honourable adjective). That is, free speech not for the tycoons, but for the workers,

the peasants, writers and scientists and for all the peoples of those lands some of which did not even have a written language before 1917.

But not the freedom of the press for printing every book or article written. Is it really to be expected that a Soviet publishing house will publish the sort of stuff that gets accepted abroad by organisations like the NTS¹?

We are so inoculated with bourgeois thought from childhood on that it requires a mental revolution to see the intellectual side of life as it really is under capitalism and to realise the extent of the battle needed to clear our minds of bourgeois cant and hypocrisy.

When the mass of writing that pours out of the Soviet presses in 89 languages with the development of 70 national literatures is compared with the products of English, Welsh, Lallans or Gaelic, and our problems of publishing any revolutionary literature, it becomes clear that it is in Britain that we need to fight for the freedom of the press.

¹ "Thoughtfully, methodically Lenin bayed at the moon—he bayed at the moon, our Ilyich . . . he howled and he stopped and listened and he howled again until he began to feel chilled and turned and ran as fast as his legs would carry him."—Sinyavsky.

DOCUMENTS ON THE CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION

As we had to go to press in the first days of July, we have not been able to comment in this issue on the recent developments in the Czechoslovak situation. We shall publish our comments and some of the important statements and documents involved in the September issue.

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